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"PREACH THE WORD."

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PREFACE.

In compliance with the wish of many friends I have consented to the publication of the following Addresses.

I deeply feel how partially and insufficiently the Glorious Gospel of the blessed God is represented in them, but I lay them at the Master's feet, praying, and asking all my Christian friends to pray, that they may be the means in their printed form of winning more souls to Christ than they have been when spoken.

D L Moody

I.

"WHERE ART THOU?"

GENESIS III. 9.

THE very first thing that happened after the news reached heaven of the fall of man, was that God came straight down to seek out the lost one. As He walks through the garden in the cool of the day, you can hear Him calling "Adam! Adam! *Where art thou?*" It was the voice of grace, of mercy, and of love. Adam ought to have taken the seeker's place, for he was the transgressor. He had fallen, and he ought to have gone up and down Eden crying, "My God! my God! where art Thou?" But God left heaven to grope through the dark world for the rebel who had fallen—not to hurl him from the face of the earth, but to plan him an escape from the misery of his sin. And He finds him—where? Hiding from his Creator among the bushes of the garden.

The moment a man is out of communion with God, even the professed child of God, he wants to hide away from Him. When God left Adam in the garden, he was in communion with his Creator, and God talked with him; but now that he has fallen, he has no desire to see his Creator, he has lost communion with his God. He cannot bear to see Him, even to think of Him, and he runs to hide from God. But to his hiding-place his Maker follows him. "Where art thou, Adam? Where art thou?"

Six thousand years have passed away, and this text has come rolling down the ages. I doubt whether there has been any one of Adam's sons who has not heard it at some period or other of his life—sometimes in the midnight hour stealing over him—"Where am I? Who am I? Where am I going? and what is going to

be the end of this?" I think it is well for a man to pause and ask himself that question. I would have you ask it, little boy; and you, little girl; and you, old man with locks turning grey, and eyes growing dim, and natural force abating, you who will soon be in another world. I do not ask you where you are in the sight of your neighbours; I do not ask you where you are in the sight of your friends; I do not ask you where you are in the sight of the community in which you live. It is of very little account where we are in the sight of one another, it is of very little account what men think of us; but it is of vast importance what *God* thinks of us—it is of vast importance to know where men are in the sight of God; and that is the question now. Am I in communion with my Creator, or out of communion? If I am out of communion, there is no peace, no joy, no happiness. No man on the face of the earth, who was out of communion with his Creator, ever knew what peace, and joy, and happiness, and true comfort are. He is a foreigner to it. But when we are in communion with God, there is light all around our path. So ask yourselves this question. Do not think I am preaching to your neighbours, but remember I am trying to speak to you, to every one of you as if you were alone. It was the first question put to man after his fall, and it was a very small audience that God had—Adam and his wife. But God was the preacher; and although they tried to hide, the words came home to them. Let them come home to you now. You may think that your life is hid, that God does not know anything about you. But He knows our lives a great deal better than we do; and his eye has been bent upon us from our earliest childhood until now.

"Where art thou?" I should like to divide my audience into three classes—the professed Christians, the Backsliders, and the Ungodly.

First, I would like to ask the professors this question, or rather let God ask it—Where art thou? What is my position in the church, and among my circle of acquaintance? Do my friends know me to be, out and out, on the Lord's side? You may have been a professing Christian for twenty years, perhaps thirty, perhaps forty years. Well, where are you to-night? Are you making

progress towards heaven? And can you give a reason for the hope that is within you? Suppose I were to ask those who are really Christians here to rise, would you be ashamed to stand up? Suppose I should ask every professed child of God here, "If you should be cut down by the hand of death, have you *good reason* to believe you would be saved?" Would you be willing to stand up before God and man, and say that you have good reason to believe you are passed from death unto life? Or would you be ashamed? Run your mind back over the past years: would it be consistent for *you* to say, "I am a Christian;" and would your life correspond with your profession? It is not what we say so much as how we live. Actions speak louder than words. Do your shopmates know that you are a Christian? Do your family know? Do they know you to be out and out on the Lord's side? Let every professed Christian ask, Where am I in the sight of God? Is my heart loyal to the King of heaven? Is my life here as it should be in the community I live in? Am I a light in this dark world? Christ says, "Ye are My witnesses." Christ was the Light of the world, and the world would not have the true Light; the world rose up and put out the Light, and now Christ says, "I leave *you* down here to testify of Me; I leave you down here as My witnesses." That is what the apostle meant when he said that Christians are to be living epistles, known and read of all men. Then, am I standing up for Jesus as I should in this dark world? If a man is for God, let him say so. If a man is for God, let him come out and be on God's side; and if he is for the world, let him be in the world. This serving God and the world at the same time—this being on both sides at the same time—is just the curse of Christianity at the present time. It retards the progress of Christianity more than any other thing. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross *daily* and follow Me."

I have heard of a great many people who think if they are united to the church, and have made one profession, that will do for all the rest of their days. But there is a cross for every one of us *daily*. Oh, child of God, where are you? If God should appear to you to-night in your bedroom and put the question, what would be your answer? Could you say, "Lord, I am serving Thee

with my whole heart and strength; I am improving my talents and preparing for the kingdom to come"? When I was in England in 1867, there was a merchant who came over from Dublin, and was talking with a business man in London; and as I happened to look in, he introduced me to the man from Dublin. Alluding to me, the latter said to the former, "Is this young man all O O?" Said the London man, "What do you mean by O O?" Replied the Dublin man, "*Is he Out-and-Out for Christ?*" I tell you it burned down into my soul. It means a good deal to be O O for Christ; but that is what all Christians ought to be, and their influence would be felt on the world very soon, if men who are on the Lord's side would come out and take their stand, and lift up their voices in season and out of season. As I have said, there are a great many in the church who make one profession, and that is about all you hear of them; and when they come to die you have to go and hunt up some musty old church records, to know whether they were Christians or not. God won't do that. I have an idea that when Daniel died, all the men in Babylon knew whom he served. There was no need for them to hunt up old books. His life told his story. What we want is men with a little courage to stand up for Christ. When Christianity wakes up, and every child that belongs to the Lord is willing to speak for Him, is willing to work for Him, and, if need be, willing to die for Him, then Christianity will advance, and we shall see the work of the Lord prosper. There is one thing which I fear more than anything else, and that is the dead cold formalism of the Church of God. Talk about the *isms!* Put them all together, and I do not fear them so much as dead, cold formalism. Talk about the *false isms!* There is none so dangerous as this dead, cold formalism, which has come right into the heart of the Church. There are so many of us just sleeping and slumbering while souls all around are perishing. I believe honestly that we professed Christians are all half-asleep. Some of us are beginning to rub our eyes and to get them half-opened, but as a whole we are asleep.

There was a little story going the round of the secular press that made a great impression upon me as a father. A father took his little child out into the field one Sabbath, and, it being a hot day, he lay down under a beautiful shady tree. The little child

ran about gathering wild flowers and little blades of grass, and coming to its father and saying, "Pretty! pretty!" At last the father fell asleep, and while he was sleeping the little child wandered away. When he awoke, his first thought was, "Where is my child?" He looked all around, but he could not see him. He shouted at the top of his voice, but all he heard was the echo of his own voice. Running to a little hill, he looked around and shouted again No response! Then going to a precipice at some distance, he looked down, and there, upon the rocks and briars, he saw the mangled form of his loved child. He rushed to the spot, took up the lifeless corpse and hugged it to his bosom, and accused himself of being the murderer of his child. While he was sleeping his child had wandered over the precipice. I thought as I heard that, what a picture of the church of God!

How many fathers and mothers, how many Christian men, are sleeping now while their children wander over the terrible precipice right into the bottomless pit of hell. Father, where is your boy to-night? It may be just out there in some public-house; it may be reeling through the streets, it may be pressing onwards to a drunkard's grave. Mother, where is your son? Is he in the house of the publican drinking away his soul—everything that is dear and sacred to him? Do you know where your boy is? Father, you have been a professed Christian for forty years; where are your children to-night? Have you lived so godly, and so Christ-like, that you can say, Follow me as I followed Christ? Are those children walking in wisdom; are they on their way to glory; have they been gathered into the fold of Christ; are their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life? How many fathers and mothers to-day would be able to answer? Did you ever stop to think that you were to blame; that you had not been faithful to your children? Depend upon it, as long as the church is living so much like the world, we cannot expect our children to be brought into the fold. Come, O Lord, and wake up every mother, and may everyone of us who are parents feel the worth of the souls of the children that God has given us. May they never bring our grey hairs with sorrow to the grave, but may they become a blessing to the church and to the world. Not long ago the only daughter of a wealthy friend of mine sickened and died. The father and mother stood by

her dying bed. He had spent all his time in accumulating wealth for her; she had been introduced into gay and fashionable society; but she had been taught nothing of Christ. As she came to the brink of the river of death, she said, "Won't you help me; it is very dark, and the stream is bitter cold." They wrung their hands in grief, but could do nothing for her; and the poor girl died in darkness and despair. What was their wealth to them then? And yet, you mothers and fathers are doing the same thing in London to-day, by ignoring the work God has given you to do. I beseech you, then, each one of you, begin to labour now for the souls of your children!

A young man, some time ago, lay dying, and his mother thought he was a Christian. One day, passing his room door, she heard him say, "Lost! lost! lost!" The mother ran into the room and cried, "My boy, is it possible you have lost your hope in Christ, now you are dying?" "No, mother, it is not that; I have a hope beyond the grave, but I have lost my life. I have lived twenty-four years, and done nothing for the Son of God, and now I am dying. My life has been spent for myself; I have lived for this world, and now, while I am dying, I have given myself to Christ; but my life is lost." Would it not be said of many of us, if we should be cut down, that our lives have been almost a failure —perhaps entirely a failure as far as leading any one else to Christ is concerned? Young lady! are you working for the Son of God? Are you trying to win some soul to Christ? Have you tried to get some friend or companion to have her name written in the book of life? Or would you say, "Lost, lost! long years have rolled away since I became a child of God, and I have never had the privilege of leading one soul to Christ?" If there is one professed child of God who never had the joy of leading even one soul into the kingdom of God, oh! let him begin at once. There is no greater privilege on earth. And I believe, my friends, there has never been a time, in our day, at least, when work for Christ was more needed than at present. I do not believe there ever was in your day or mine a time when the Spirit of God was more poured out upon the world. There is not a part of Christendom where the work is not being carried on; and it looks very much as if the glad tidings were just going to take, as it were, a fresh start

and go round the globe. Is it not time that the Church of God should wake up and come to the help of the Lord as one man, and strive to beat back those dark waves of death that roll through our streets, bearing upon their bosom the noblest and the best we have? Oh, may God wake up the Church! And let us trim our lights, and go forth and work for the kingdom of His Son.

Now, Secondly, let me talk a little while to those who have gone back into the world—to the Backslider. It may be you came to some great city a few years ago a professed Christian. You were member of a church once, and a teacher in the Sabbath-school, perhaps; but when you came among strangers you thought you would just wait a little—perhaps take a class by and by. So you gave up teaching in the Sunday-school; you gave up all work for Christ. Then in your new church you did not receive the attention or the warm welcome that you expected, and you got into the habit of staying away. You have gone so far now, that you are found in the theatre, perhaps, and the companion of blasphemers and drunkards. Perhaps I am speaking now to some one who has been away from his father's house for many years. Come, now, backslider, tell me, are you happy? Have you had one happy hour since you left Christ? Does the world satisfy you, or those husks that you have got in the far country? I have travelled a good deal, but I never found a happy backslider in my life. I never knew a man who was really born of God that ever could find the world satisfy him afterwards. Do you think the Prodigal Son was satisfied in that foreign country? Ask the prodigals in this city if they are truly happy. You know they are not. "There is no peace, saith my God to the wicked." There is no joy for the man in rebellion against his Creator. Supposing he has tasted the heavenly gift, and been in communion with God, and had sweet fellowship with the King of Heaven, and had pleasant hours of service for the Master, but has backslidden, is it possible that he can be happy? If he is, it is good evidence he was never really converted. If a man has been born again, and has received the heavenly nature, this world can never satisfy the cravings of his nature. Oh, backslider, I pity you! But I want to tell you that the Lord Jesus pities you a good deal more than any one else can.

He knows how bitter your life is; He knows how dark your life is; He wants you to come home. Oh, backslider, come home to-night! I have a loving message from your Father. The Lord wants you, and calls you back to-night, "Come home, oh wanderer, this night: return from the dark mountains of sin." Return, and your Father will give you a warm welcome. I know that the devil has told you that God won't have anything to do with you, because you have wandered away. If that is true, there would be very few men in heaven. David backslid; Abraham and Jacob turned away from God; I do not believe there is a saint in heaven but at some time of his life with his heart has backslidden from God. Perhaps not in his life, but in his heart. The prodigal's heart got into the far country before his body got there. Backslider! to-night come home. Your Father does not want you to stay away. Think you the prodigal's father was not anxious for him to come home all those long years he was there? Every year the father was looking and longing for him to return home. So God wants you to come home. I do not care how far you have wandered away; the great Shepherd will receive you back into the fold to-night. Did you ever hear of a backslider coming home, and God not willing to receive him? I have heard of earthly fathers and mothers not being willing to receive back their sons; but I defy any man to say he ever knew a really honest backslider want to get home, but God was willing to take him in.

A number of years ago, before any railway came into Chicago, they used to bring in the grain from the Western prairies in waggons for hundreds of miles, so as to have it shipped off by the Lakes. There was a father who had a large farm out there, and who used to preach the gospel as well as attend to his farm. One day, when church business engaged him, he sent his son to Chicago with grain. He waited and waited for his boy to return, but he did not come home. At last he could wait no longer, so he saddled his horse and rode to the place where his son had sold the grain. He found that he had been there and got the money for the grain; then he began to fear that his boy had been murdered and robbed. At last, with the aid of a detective, they tracked him to a gambling den, where they found that he had gambled away the whole of his money. In hopes of winning it back again, he then had sold the

team, and lost that money too. He had fallen among thieves, and like the man who was going to Jericho, they stripped him, and then they cared no more about him. What could he do? He was ashamed to go home to meet his father, and he fled. The father knew what it all meant. He knew the boy thought he would be very angry with him. He was grieved to think that his boy should have such feelings towards him. That is just exactly like the sinner. He thinks because he has sinned, God will have nothing to do with him. But what did that father do? Did he say, "Let the boy go"? No; he went after him. He arranged his business and started after the boy. That man went from town to town, from city to city. He would get the ministers to let him preach, and at the close he would tell his story. "I have got a boy who is a wanderer on the face of the earth somewhere." He would describe his boy and say, "If you ever hear of him or see him, will you not write to me?" At last he found that he had gone to California, thousands of miles away. Did that father say, "Let him go?" No; off he went to the Pacific coast, seeking the boy. He went to San Francisco, and advertised in the newspapers that he would preach at such a church on such a day. When he had preached he told his story, in hopes that the boy might have seen the advertisement and come to the church. When he had done, away under the gallery there was a young man who waited until the audience had gone out; then he came towards the pulpit. The father looked, and saw it was that boy, and he ran to him, and pressed him to his bosom. The boy wanted to confess what he had done, but not a word would the father hear. He forgave him freely, and took him to his home once more.

Oh, prodigal, you may be wandering on the dark mountains of sin, but God wants you to come home. The devil has been telling you lies about God; you think He will not receive you back. I tell you, He will welcome you this minute if you will come. Say, "I will arise and go to my Father." May God incline you to take this step. There is not one whom Jesus has not sought far longer than that father. There has not been a day since you left Him but He has followed you. I do not care what the past has been, or how black your life, He will receive you back. Arise then, O backslider, and come home once more to your Father's house.

Not long ago, in Edinburgh, a lady who was an earnest Christian worker, found a young woman whose feet had taken hold of hell, and who was pressing onwards to a harlot's grave. The lady begged her to go back to her home, but she said no, her parents would never receive her. This Christian woman knew what a mother's heart was; so she sat down and wrote a letter to the mother, telling her how she had met her daughter, who was sorry, and wanted to return. The next post brought an answer back, and on the envelope was written, "Immediately—immediately!" That was a mother's heart. They opened the letter. Yes, she was forgiven. They wanted her back, and they sent money for her to come *immediately*. Sinner, that is the proclamation, "Come *immediately*." That is what the great and loving God is saying to every wandering sinner—*immediately*. Yes, backslider, come home to-night. He will give you a warm welcome, and there will be joy in heaven over your return. Come now, for everything is ready.

A friend of mine said to me some time ago, Did you ever notice what the prodigal lost by going into that country? He lost his *food*. That is what every poor backslider loses. They get no manna from heaven. The Bible is a closed book to them; they see no beauty in the Word of God.

Then the prodigal lost his *work*. He was a Jew, and they made him take care of swine; that was all loss for a Jew. So every backslider loses his work. He cannot do anything for God; he cannot work for eternity. He is a stumbling-block to the world. My friend, do not let the world stumble over you into hell.

The prodigal also lost his *testimony*. Who believed him? I can imagine some of these men came along, natives of that country, and they saw this poor prodigal in his rags, barefooted and bareheaded. There he stands among the swine, and some one says to another, "Look at that poor wretch." "What," he says, "do you call me a poor wretch? My father is a wealthy man; he has got more clothes in his wardrobe than you ever saw in your life. My father is a man of great wealth and position." Do you suppose these men would believe him? "That poor wretch the son of a wealthy man!" Not one of them would believe him. "If he had got such a wealthy father he would go to him." So with the

backsliders; the world does not believe that they are the sons of a King. They say, "Why don't they go to Him, if there is bread enough and to spare? Why don't they go home?"

Then, another thing the prodigal lost was his *home*. He had no home in that foreign country. As long as his money lasted, he was quite popular in the saloons and among his acquaintances; he had professed friends, but as soon as his money was gone, where were his friends? That is the condition of every poor backslider in the world.

But now I can imagine some one saying, "There would be little use of me attempting to come back. In a few days I should just be where I was again. I should like very much to go to my Father's home again, but I'm afraid I wouldn't stay there." Well, just picture this scene. The poor prodigal has got home, and the father has killed the fatted calf; and there they are, sitting at the table eating. I can imagine that was about the sweetest morsel he ever got—perhaps the nicest dinner he ever had in his life. His father sits opposite; he is full of joy, and his heart is leaping within him. All at once he sees his boy weeping. "My son, what are you weeping for? Are you not glad to have got home?" "Oh, yes, father; I never was so glad as I am to-day: but I am so afraid I will go back into that foreign country!" Why, you cannot imagine such a thing! When you have got one meal in your Father's house, you will never be inclined to wander away again.

Now let me speak to the Third class. "If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" Sinner, what is to become of you? How shall you escape? "*Where art thou?*" Is it true that you are living without God and without hope in the world? Did you ever stop to think what would become of your soul if you should be taken away by a sudden stroke of illness—where you would stand in eternity? I read that the sinner is without God, without hope, and without excuse. If you are not saved, what excuse will you have to give? You cannot say that it is God's fault. He is only too anxious to save you. I want to tell you to-night that you can be saved if you will. If you really want to pass from death to life, if you want to become an

heir of eternal life, if you want to become a child of God, make up your mind this night that you will seek the kingdom of God. I tell you, upon the authority of this Word, that if you seek the kingdom of God you will find it. No man ever sought Christ with a heart to find Him who did not find Him. I never knew a man make up his mind to have the question settled, but it was settled soon. This last year there has been a solemn feeling stealing over me. I am what they call in the middle of life, in the prime of life. I look upon life as a man who has reached the top of a hill, and just begins to go down the other side. I have got to the top of the hill, if I should live the full term of life—threescore years and ten—and am just on the other side. I am speaking to many now who are also on the top of the hill, and I ask you, if you are not Christians, just to pause a few minutes, and ask yourselves where you are. Let us look back on the hill that we have been climbing. What do you see? Yonder is the cradle. It is not far away. How short life is! It all seems but as yesterday. Look along up the hill, and yonder is a tombstone; it marks the resting-place of a loved mother. When that mother died, did you not promise God that you would serve Him? Did you not say that your mother's God should become your God? And did you not take her hand in the stillness of the dying hour, and say, "Yes, mother, I will meet you in heaven!" And have you kept that promise? Are you trying to keep it? Ten years have rolled away: fifteen years—but are you any nearer God? Did the promise work any improvement in you? No, your heart is getting harder; the night is getting darker; by and by death will be throwing its shadows round you. My friend, Where art thou? Look again. A little further up the hill there is another tombstone. It marks the resting-place of a little child. It may have been a little lovely girl—perhaps her name was Mary; or it may have been a boy—Charley; and when that child was taken from you, did you not promise God, and did you not promise the child, that you would meet it in heaven? Is the promise kept? Think! Are you still fighting against God? Are you still hardening your heart? Sermons that would have moved you five years ago—do they touch you now?

Once more look down the hill. Yonder there is a grave; you

cannot tell how many days, or weeks, or years it is away; you are hastening towards that grave. Even should you live the life allotted to man, many of you are near the end, you are getting very feeble, and your locks are turning grey. It may be the coffin is already made that this body shall be laid in; it may be that the shroud is already waiting. My friend, is it not the height of madness to put off salvation so long? Undoubtedly I am speaking to some who will be in eternity a week from now. In a large audience like this, during the next week death will surely come and snatch some away; it may be the speaker, or it may be some one who is listening. Why put off the question another day? Why say to the Lord Jesus again to-night, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for Thee?" Why not let Him come in to-night? Why not open your heart, and say, "King of Glory, come in?'

Will there ever be a better opportunity? Did not you promise ten, fifteen, twenty, thirty years ago that you would serve God? Some of you said you would do it when you got married and settled down; some of you said you would serve Him when you were your own master. Have you attended to it?

You know there are three steps to the lost world; let me give you their names. The first is Neglect. All a man has to do is to neglect salvation, and that will take him to the lost world. Some people say, "What have I done!" Why, if you merely neglect salvation, you will be lost. I am on a swift river, and lying in the bottom of my little boat. Down yonder, ten miles below, is the great cataract. Every one that goes over it perishes. I need not row the boat down; I have only to pull in the oars, and fold my arms, and *neglect*. So all that a man has to do is to fold his arms in the current of life, and he will drift onwards and be lost.

The second step is Refusal. If I met you at the door and pressed this question on you, you would say, "Not to-night, Mr. Moody, not to-night;" and if I repeated, "I want you to press into the kingdom of God," you would politely refuse: "I will not become a Christian to-night, thank you; I know I ought, but I *won't* to-night."

Then the last step is to Despise it. Some of you have already got on the lower round of the ladder. You despise Christ. You

hate Christ, you hate Christianity; you hate the best people on earth and the best friends you have got; and if I were to offer you the Bible, you would tear it up and put your foot upon it. Oh, despisers! you will soon be in another world. Make haste and repent and turn to God. Now, on which step are you, my friend; neglecting, or refusing, or despising? Bear in mind that a great many are taken off from the first step: they die in neglect. And a great many are taken away refusing. And a great many are on the last step, despising salvation.

A few years ago they *neglected*, then they got to *refuse;* and now they *despise* Christianity and Christ. They hate the sound of the church bell; they hate the Bible and the Christian; they curse the very ground that we walk on. But one more step and they are gone. Oh ye despisers, I set before you life and death; which will you choose? When Pilate had Christ on his hands, he said, "What shall I do with Him?" and the multitude cried out, "Away with Him! crucify Him!" Young men, is that your language to-night? Do you say, "Away with this gospel! Away with Christianity! Away with your prayers, your sermons, your gospel sounds! I do not want Christ?" Or will you be wise and say, "Lord Jesus, I want Thee, I need Thee, I will have Thee?" Oh, may God bring you to that decision!

II.

"THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE."

ROMANS III. 22.

THAT is one of the hardest truths man has to learn. We are apt to think that we are just a little better than our neighbours, and if we find they *are* a little better than ourselves, we go to work and try to pull them down to our level. If you want to find out who and what man is, go to the third chapter of Romans, and there the whole story is told. "There is none righteous, no, not one." "All have sinned and come short." *All.* Some men like to have their lives written before they die; if any of you would like to read your biography, turn to this chapter, and you will find it already written.

I can imagine some one saying, "I wonder if he really pretends to say that 'there is no difference.'" The teetotaller says, "Am I no better than the drunkard?" Well, I want to say right here, that it is a good deal better to be temperate than intemperate; a good deal better to be honest than dishonest; it is better for a man to be upright in all his transactions than to cheat right and left, even in this life. But when it comes to the great question of salvation, that does not touch the question at all, because "all have sinned and *come short* of the glory of God." Men are all bad by nature; the old Adam-stock is bad, and we cannot bring forth good fruit until we are grafted into the one True Vine. If I have an orchard, and two apple trees in it, which both bear some bitter apples, perfectly worthless, does it make any difference to me that the one tree has got perhaps five hundred apples, all bad, and the other only two, both bad? There is no difference; only one tree

has more fruit than the other. But it is all *bad.* So it is with man. One thinks he has got only one or two very little sins—God won't notice that; why, that other man has broken every one of the ten commandments! No matter, there is no difference; they are both guilty; they have both broken the law. The law demands complete and perfect fulfilment, and if you cannot do that, you are lost, as far as the law is concerned. "*Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*" Suppose you were to hang up a man to the roof with a chain of ten links; if one were to break, does it matter that the other nine are all sound and whole? Not the least. One link breaks, and down comes the man. But is it not rather hard that he should fall when the other nine are perfect, when only one is broken? Why, of course not; if one is broken, it is just the same to the man as if all had been broken: he falls. So the man who breaks one commandment is guilty of all. He is a criminal in God's sight. Look at yonder prison, with its thousand victims. Some are there for murder, some for stealing, some for forgery, some for one thing and some for another. You may classify them, but every man is a *criminal.* They have all broken the law, and they are all paying the penalty. So the law has brought every man in a criminal in the sight of God.

If a man should advertise that he could take a correct photograph of people's hearts, do you believe he would find a customer? There is not a man among us whom you could hire to have his photograph taken, if you could photograph the real man. We go to have our faces taken, and carefully arrange our toilet, and if the artist flatters us, we say, "Oh, yes, that's a first-rate likeness," as we pass it round among our friends. But let the real man be brought out, the photograph of the heart, and see if a man will pass that round among his neighbours. Why, you would not want your own wife to see it! You would be frightened even to look at it yourself. Nobody knows what is in that heart but Christ. We are told that "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" We do not know our own hearts; none of us have any idea how bad they are. Some bitter things are written against me, but I know a good many more things about myself that are bad than any other man. There

is nothing good in the old Adam nature. We have got a heart in rebellion against God by nature, and we do not even love God unless we are born of the Spirit. I can understand why men do not like this third chapter of Romans—it is too strong for them. It speaks the truth too plainly. But just because we do not like it, we shall be all the better for having a look at it; very likely we shall find that it is exactly what we want, after all. It's a truth that men do not at all like, but I have noticed that the medicine we do not like is the medicine that will do us most good. If we do not think we are as bad as the description, we must just take a closer look at ourselves. Here is a man who thinks he is not just so bad as it makes him out to be. He is sure he is a little better than his neighbour next door; why, he goes to church regularly, and his neighbour never goes to church at all! "Of course," he congratulates himself, "I'll certainly get saved easier." But there is no use trying to evade it. God has given us the law to measure ourselves by, and by this most perfect rule "we have all sinned and come short," and "there is no difference."

Paul brings in the law to show man that he is lost and ruined. God, being a perfect God, had to give a perfect law, and the law was given not to save men, but to measure them by. I want you to understand this clearly, because I believe hundreds and thousands stumble there. They try to save themselves by trying to keep the law; but it was never meant for men to save themselves by. The law has never saved a single man since the world began. Men have been trying to keep it, but they have never succeeded, and never will. Ask Paul what it was given for. Here is his answer, "That every mouth might be stopped, and the whole world become guilty before God." In this third chapter of Romans the world has been put on its trial, and found guilty. The verdict has been brought in against us all—these ministers and elders and church members, just as much as the prodigal and the drunkard—"All have sinned and come short.

The law stops every man's mouth. God will have a man humble himself down on his face before Him, with not a word to say for himself. Then God will speak to him, when he owns that he is a sinner, and gets rid of all his own righteousness. I can always tell a man who has got near the kingdom of God: his mouth is

stopped. If you will allow me the expression, God always shuts up a man's lips before He saves him. Job was not saved until he stopped talking about himself. Just see how God dealt with him. First of all, He afflicts him, and Job begins to talk about his own goodness. "I delivered the poor," he says, "and the fatherless, and him who had none to help him. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor!" Why, they would have made Job an elder, if there had been elders in those days! He had been a wonderfully good man! But now God says, "I'll put a few questions to you. Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou Me.' And Job is down directly; he is ashamed of himself; he cannot speak of his works any more. "Behold," he cries, "I am vile; what shall I answer Thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth." But he is not low enough yet, perhaps, and God puts a few more questions. "Ah!" says Job, "I never understood these things before—I never saw it in that light." He is thoroughly humbled now; he can't help confessing it. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. *Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*" Now he has found his right position before God, and now God can talk to him. And God helps him, and raises him up, and gives him the double of all that he had before. The clouds, and the mist, and the darkness round his path are driven away, and light from eternity bursts into his soul when he sees his nothingness in the sight of a pure and holy God.

This, then, is what God gives us the law for—to show us ourselves in our true colours.

I said to my little family, one morning, a few weeks before the Chicago fire, "I am coming home this afternoon to give you a ride." My little boy clapped his hands. "Oh, papa, will you take me to see the bears in Lincoln Park?" "Yes." You know boys are very fond of seeing bears. I had not been gone long when my little boy said, "Mamma, I wish you would get me ready." "Oh," she said, "it will be a long time before papa comes." "But I want to get ready, mamma." At last he was ready to have the ride, face washed, and clothes all nice and clean. "Now, you must take good care and not get yourself dirty again," said mamma,

Oh, of course he was going to take care; he wasn't going to get dirty. So off he ran to watch for me. However, it was a long time yet until the afternoon, and after a little he began to play. When I got home, I found him outside, with his face all covered with dirt. "I can't take you to the Park that way, Willie." "Why, papa? you said you would take me." "Ah, but I can't; you're all over mud. I couldn't be seen with such a dirty little boy." "Why, I'se clean, papa; mamma washed me." "Well, you've got dirty since." But he began to cry, and I could not convince him that he was dirty. "I'se clean; mamma washed me!" he cried. Do you think I argued with him? No. I just took him up in my arms, and carried him into the house, and showed him his face in the looking-glass. He had not a word to say. He could not take my word for it; but one look at the glass was enough; he saw it for himself. He didn't say he wasn't dirty after that!

Now the looking-glass showed him that his face was dirty —*but I did not take the looking-glass to wash it;* of course not. Yet that is just what thousands of people do. The law is the looking-glass to see ourselves in, to show us how vile and worthless we are in the sight of God; but they take the law, and try to *wash* themselves with it! Man has been trying that for six thousand years, and has miserably failed. *By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight.* Only one Man ever lived on the earth who could say He had kept the law, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ. If He had committed one sin, and came short in the smallest degree, his offering Himself for us would have been useless. But men have tried to do what He did, and have failed. Instead of sheltering under his righteousness, they have offered God their own. And God knew what a miserable failure it would be. "There is none righteous, no not one."

I don't care where you put man, everywhere he has been tried he has proved a total failure. He was put in Eden on trial; and some men say they wish they had Adam's chance. If you had, you would go down as quickly as he did. You put five hundred children into this hall, and give them ten thousand toys; tell them they can run all over the hall, and they can have anything they want except one thing, placed, let us say, in one of the corners of

Mr. Sankey's organ. You go out for a little, and do you think that is not the very first place they will go to? Why, nothing else in the room would have any attraction for them but just the thing they were told not to touch. And so let us not think Adam was any worse than ourselves. Adam was put on trial, and Satan walks into Eden. I do not know how long he was there, but I should think he had not been there twenty minutes before he stripped Adam of everything he had. There he is, fresh from the hands of his Creator; Satan comes upon the scene, and presents a temptation, and down he goes. *He was a failure.*

Then God took man into covenant with Him. He said to Abraham, "Look yonder at the stars in the heavens and the sands on the seashore; I will make your seed like that. I will bless thee and multiply thee upon the earth." But what a stupendous failure man was under the covenant. Go back and read about it.

They are brought out of Egypt, see many signs and wonders, and stand at last at the foot of Mount Sinai. Then God's holy law is given them. Did they not promise to keep it? "O yes," they cry, "we'll keep the law; O dear, yes!" To hear them talk you might think it was going to be all right now. But just wait till Joshua and Moses have turned their backs! No sooner have their leaders gone up the mountain to have an interview with God than they begin saying, "Wonder what's become of this man Moses? we don't know where he's got to. Come, let us make unto us another God. Aaron! make us a golden calf; here are the golden ornaments we got from the Egyptians, come and make us another god." So when it is made, the people raise a great shout, and fall down and worship it. "Hark! listen; what shout is that I hear?" says Moses, as he comes down the mountain side. "Alas," says Joshua, "there's war in the camp, it is the shout of the victor." "Ah, no," says Moses, "it isn't the shout of victory or of war, Joshua, it is the cry of the idolaters. They have forgotten the God who delivered them from the Egyptians, who led them through the Red Sea, who fed them with bread from heaven —angels' food. They have forgotten their promises to keep the commandments. Already the first two of them are broken, 'no other gods,' 'no graven image.' They've made them another god—a golden god!" And that's what men have been doing ever since.

There are more men in this city worshipping the golden calf than the God of heaven. Look around you. They bring before it health, and happiness, and peace. "Give me thirty pieces of silver, and I will sell you Christ," is the world's cry to-day. "Give me fashion, and I will sell you Christ!" "I will sacrifice my wife, my children, my life, my all, for a little drink. I will sell my soul for drink!" It is easy to blame these men for worshipping the golden calf. But what are we doing ourselves? Ah, man was a *failure* then, and he has been a failure ever since.

Then God put him under the judges, and wonderful judges they were; but, once more, what a failure he was! After that came the prophets, and what a failure he was under them! Then came the Son from heaven Himself, right out of the bosom of the Father. He left the throne and came down here, to teach us how to live. We took Him and murdered Him on Calvary! Man was a *failure* in Christ's time.

And now we are living under the dispensation of grace—a wonderful dispensation. God is showering down blessings from above. But what is man under grace! A stupendous failure. Look at that man reeling on his way to a drunkard's grave, and his soul to a drunkard's hell. Look at the wretched harlots on your streets. Look at the profligacy, and the pauperism and the loathsome sickness. Look at the vice and crime that festers everywhere, and tell me is it not true that man is a *failure* under grace?

Yes, man is a failure. I can see right down the other side of the millennium; Christ has swayed his sceptre over the earth for a thousand years; but man is a failure still. For "when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle.....and they compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." What man wants is another nature; he must be born again. What a foolish saying, "Experience teaches." Man has been a long time at that school, and has never learned his lesson yet—his own weakness and inability. He still thinks great things of his own strength. "I am going to stand after this," he says, "I have hit upon the right plan this

time. I am able to keep the law now." But the first temptation comes, and he is down. Man will not believe in God's strength. Man will not acknowledge himself a failure, and surrender to Christ to save him from his sins.

But is it not better to find out in this world that we are a failure, and to go to Christ for deliverance, than to sleep on and go down to hell without knowing we are sinners?

I know this doctrine that we have all failed, that we have all sinned, and come short, is exceedingly objectionable to the natural man. If I had tried to find out the most disagreeable verse in the whole Bible, perhaps I could not have fastened upon one more universally disliked than "There *is no difference*."

I can imagine—and I think I have a right to imagine it—Noah, leaving his ark and going off preaching for once in a while. As the passers-by stop to listen, there is no sound of the hammer or the plane. Noah has stopped work. He has gone off on a preaching tour, to warn his countrymen. Perhaps he was telling them that there was a great deluge coming to sweep away all the workers of iniquity; perhaps he was warning them that *every* man who was not in the ark must perish; that there would be *no difference*. I can imagine one man saying, "You had better go back and finish your work, Noah, rather than come here preaching. You don't think we are going to believe in such nonsense as that. You tell us that all are going to perish alike! Do you really expect us to believe that the kings and governors, the sheriffs and the princes, the rulers, the beggars and thieves and harlots, are all going to be alike lost?" "Yes," says Noah; "the deluge that is coming by and by will take you all away—every man that is not in the ark must die. There will be no difference." Doubtless they thought Noah had gone raving mad. But did not the flood come and take them all away? Princes and paupers, and knaves and kings—was there any difference? No difference.

When the destroying angel was about to pass through Egypt, no doubt the haughty Egyptian laughed at the poor Israelite putting the blood on his door-post and lintel. "What a foolish notion," he would say, derisively; "the very idea of sprinkling blood on a door-post! If there *were* anything coming, that would never keep it away. I don't believe there is any death coming at all; and if

it did, it might touch these poor people, but it would certainly never come near us." But when the night came, there was no difference. The king in his palace, the captive in his prison, the beggar by the wayside—they were all alike. Into every house the king of terrors had come, and there was universal mourning in the land. In the home of the poor and the lowly, in the home of the prince and the noble, in the home of the governor and ruler, the eldest son lay dead. Only the poor Israelite escaped who had the blood on the door-post and lintel. And when God comes to us in judgment, if we are not in Christ, all will be alike. Learned or unlearned, high or low, priest or scribe—there will be no difference.

Once more, I can imagine Abraham going down from the hills to Sodom. He stands up, let us say, at the corners of the streets, before Sodom was destroyed—"Ye men of Sodom, I have a message from my God to you." The people stand and look at the old man—you can see his white locks as the wind sweeps through them—"I have a warning for you," he cries. "God is going to destroy the five cities of the plain, and every man who does not escape to yonder mountain must perish. When He comes to deal in judgment with you there will be no difference; every man must die. The Lord Mayor, the princes, the chief men, the mighty men, the judges, the treasurers—all must perish. The thief and the vagabond, and the drunkard—yes, all must perish alike. There can be 'no difference.'" But these Sodomites answer, "You had better go back to your tent on the hills, Abraham. We don't believe a word of it. Sodom was never so prosperous; business was never so flourishing as now. The sun never shone any brighter than it does to-day. The lambs are skipping on the hills, and everything moving on as it has done for centuries. Don't preach that stuff to us; we don't believe it." A few hours pass, and Sodom is in ashes! Did God make any difference among those who would not believe? No, God never utters any opinion; what He says is truth. "All have sinned and come short," He cries; "and there is no difference." I read of a deluge of fire that is going to roll over this earth, and when God comes to deal in judgment, there will be no difference, and every man who is out of Christ must perish.

It was my sad lot to be in the Chicago fire. As the flames

rolled down our streets, destroying everything in their onward march, I saw the great and the honourable, the learned and the wise, fleeing before the fire with the beggar, and the thief, and the harlot. All were alike. As the flames swept through the city it was like the judgment day. The mayor, nor the mighty men, nor wise men could stop these flames. They were all on a level then, and many who were worth hundreds of thousands were left paupers that night. When the day of judgment comes, there will be no difference. When the deluge came there was no difference; Noah's ark was worth more than all the world. The day before, it was the world's laughing-stock, and if it had been put up to auction, you could not have got anybody to buy it except for firewood. But the deluge came, and then it was worth more than all the world together. And when the day of judgment comes, Christ will be worth more than all this world, more than ten thousand worlds. And if it was a terrible thing in the days of Noah to die outside the ark, it will be far more terrible for us to go down in our sins to a Christless grave.

Now I hope that you have seen what I have been trying to prove—that we are all sinners alike. If I have failed to prove that, then the meeting to-night has been a failure. I should like to use another illustration or two. I should like to make this truth so plain that a child might know it. In the olden times in England, we are told, they used to have a game of firing arrows through a ring on the top of a pole. The man that failed to get all his arrows through the ring was called a "sinner." Now I should like for a moment to take up that illustration. Suppose our pole to be up in the gallery, and on the top of it the ring. I have got ten arrows, let us say, and Mr. Sankey has got other ten. I take up the first arrow, and take a good aim. Alas! I miss the mark. Therefore I am a "sinner." "But," I say, "I will do the best I can with the other nine; I have only missed with one." Like some men who try to keep all the commandments but one! I fire again, and miss the mark a second time. "Ah, but," I say, "I have got eight arrows still," and away goes another arrow—miss! I fire all the ten arrows and do not get one through the ring. Well, I was a "sinner" after the first miss, and I can only be a "sinner" after the tenth. Now Mr. Sankey comes with his

ten arrows. He fires and gets his first arrow through. "Do you see that?" he says. "Well," I reply, "go on; don't boast until you get them all through." He takes the second arrow and gets that through. "Ha! do you see that?" "Don't boast," I repeat, "until all ten are through;" if a man has not broken the law at all then he has got something to boast of! Away goes the third, and it goes through. Then another and another all right, and another until nine are through. "Now," he says, "one more arrow, and I am not a sinner." He takes up the last arrow, and his hand trembles a little; he *just misses* the mark. *And he is a "sinner" as well as I am.* My friend, have you never missed the mark? Have you not come short? I should like to see the man who never missed the mark. *He never lived.*

Let me give you just one more illustration. When Chicago was a small town, it was incorporated and made a city. When we got our charter for the city, there was one clause in the constitution that allowed the Mayor to appoint all the police. It worked very well when it was a small city; but when it had three or four hundred thousand inhabitants, it put too much power in the hands of one man. So our leading citizens got a new bill passed that took the power out of the hands of the Mayor, and put it into the hands of Commissioners appointed by Government. There was one clause in the new law that no man should be a policeman who was not a certain height—5 feet 6 inches, let us say. When the Commissioners got into power, they advertised for men as candidates, and in the advertisement they stated that no man need apply who could not bring good credentials to recommend him. I remember going past the office one day, and there was a crowd of them waiting to get in. They quite blocked up the side of the street; and they were comparing notes as to their chances of success. One says to another, "I have got a good letter of recommendation from the Mayor, and one from the supreme judge." Another says, "And I have got a good letter from Senator So-and-so. I'm sure to get in." The two men come on together, and lay their letters down on the Commissioners' desk. "Well," say the officials, "you have certainly a good many letters, but we won't read them till we measure you." Ah! they forgot all about that. So the first man is measured, and he is only five feet. "No chance for

you, sir; the law says the men must be 5 feet 6 inches, and you don't come up to the standard." The other says, "Well, my chance is a good deal better than his. I'm a good bit taller than he is"—he begins to measure himself by the other man. That is what people are always doing, measuring themselves by others. Measure yourselves by the law of God, or by the Son of God Himself; and if you do that, you will find you have come short. He goes up to the officers, and they measure him; he is 5 feet 5 inches and nine-tenths of an inch. "No good," they tell him; "you're not up to the standard." "But I'm only one-tenth of an inch short," he remonstrates. "It's no matter," they say; "there's no difference." He goes with the man who was five feet. One comes short six inches, and the other only one-tenth of an inch, but the law cannot be changed. And the law of God is that no man shall go into the kingdom of heaven with *one* sin on him. He that has broken the least law is guilty of all.

"Then, is there any hope for me?" you say. "What star is there to relieve the midnight darkness and gloom? What is to become of me? If all this is true, I am a poor lost soul. I have committed sin from my earliest childhood." Thank God, my friends, this is just where the gospel comes in. "He was made sin for us who knew no sin." "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with his stripes we are healed." "We all like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord *hath laid* upon Him the iniquity of us all."

You ask me what my hope is; it is, that Christ died for my sins, in my stead, in my place, and therefore I can enter into life eternal. You ask Paul what his hope was. "Christ died for our sins according to the Scripture." This is the hope in which died all the glorious martyrs of old, in which all who have entered heaven's gate have found their only comfort. Take that doctrine of substitution out of the Bible, and my hope is lost. With the law, without Christ, we are all undone. The law we have broken, and it can only hang over our head the sharp sword of justice. Even if we could keep it from this moment, there remains the unforgiven past. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission."

He only is safe for eternity who is sheltered behind the finished work of Christ. What the law cannot do for us, He can do. He obeyed it to the very letter, and under His obedience we can take our stand. For us He has suffered all its penalties, and paid all that the law demands. "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." He saw the awful end from the beginning; He knew what death, what ruin, what misery lay before us if we were left to ourselves. And He came from heaven to teach us the new and living way by which "all that believe are justified from all things from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

There is a well-known story told of Napoleon the First's time. In one of the conscriptions, during one of his many wars, a man was balloted as a conscript who did not want to go, but he had a friend who offered to go in his place. His friend joined the regiment in his name, and was sent off to the war. By and by a battle came on, in which he was killed, and they buried him on the battle-field. Some time after the Emperor wanted more men, and by some mistake the first man was balloted a second time. They went to take him, but he remonstrated. "You cannot take me." "Why not!" "I am dead," was the reply. "You are not dead; you are alive and well." "But I *am* dead," he said. "Why, man, you must be mad. Where did you die?" "At such a battle, and you left me buried on such a battle-field." "You talk like a madman," they cried; but the man stuck to his point that he had been dead and buried some months. "You look up your books," he said, "and see if it is not so." They looked, and found that he was right. They found the man's name entered as drafted, sent to the war, and marked off as killed. "Look here," they said, "you didn't die; you must have got some one to go for you; it must have been your *substitute*." "I know that," he said; "he died in my stead. You cannot touch me: I died in that man, and I go free. The law has no claim against me." They would not recognize the doctrine of substitution, and the case was carried to the Emperor. But he said that the man was right, that he was dead and buried in the eyes of the law, and that France had no claim against him.

The story may be true, or it may not, but one thing I know to

be true, that the Emperor of heaven recognizes the doctrine of substitution. Christ died for me; that is my hope of eternal life. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." If you ask me what you must do to share this blessing, I answer, go and deal personally with Christ about it. Take the sinner's place at the foot of the cross. Strip yourself of all your own righteousness, and put on Christ's. Wrap yourself up in his perfect robe, and receive Him by simple trust as your own Saviour. Thus you inherit the priceless treasures that Christ hath purchased with his blood. "*As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.*" Yes, sons of God; power to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil; power to crucify every besetting sin, passion, lust; power to shout in triumph over every trouble and temptation of your life, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

I have been trying to tell you the old, old tale that men are sinners. I may be speaking to some one, perhaps, who thinks it a waste of time. "God knows I'm a sinner," he cries; "you don't need to prove it. Since I could speak, I've done nothing but break every law of earth and heaven." Well, my friend, I have good news for you. It is just as easy for God to save you, who have broken the whole decalogue, as the man who has only broken one of the commandments. Both are dead—dead in sins. It is no matter how *dead* you are, or how long you have been dead; Christ can bring you to life just the same. There is no difference. When Christ met that poor widow coming out of Nain, following the body of her darling boy to the grave—he was just newly dead—His loving heart could not pass her; He stopped the funeral, and bade the dead arise. He was obeyed at once, and the mother was clasped once more in the living embrace of her son. And when Jesus stood by the grave of Lazarus, who had been dead *four days*, was it not just as easy for Him to say, "Lazarus, come forth"? Was it not as easy for Him to bring Lazarus from his tomb, who had been dead four days, as the son of the widow, who had been dead but one? Yes, it was just as easy; there was no difference. They were both alike dead, and Christ saved the one just as easily, and as willingly, and as lovingly as the other. And therefore, my friend, you need not complain that Christ cannot save you. Why,

Christ died *for the ungodly.* And if you turn to Him at this moment with an honest heart, and receive Him simply as your Saviour and your God, I have the authority of his Word for telling you that He will *in no wise cast out.*

And you who have never felt the burden of your sin—you who think there is a great deal of difference—you who thank God that you are not as other men—beware. God has nothing to say to the self-righteous. And unless you humble yourself before Him in the dust, and confess before Him your iniquities and sins, the gate of heaven, which is open only for *sinners*, saved by *grace*, must be shut against you for ever.

III.

GOOD NEWS.

"THE GOSPEL."—I COR. XV. I.

I DO not think there is a word in the English language so little understood as the word "gospel." We hear it every day, and we have heard it from our earliest childhood, yet there are many people, and even many Christians, who do not really know what it means. I believe I was a child of God along time before I really knew. The word "gospel" means "God's spell," or good spell, or, in other words, "good news." The gospel is good tidings of great joy. No better news ever came out of heaven than the gospel. No better news ever fell upon the ears of the family of man than the gospel. When the angels came down to proclaim the tidings, what did they say to those shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem? "Behold, I bring you *sad* tidings?" No! "Behold, I bring you *bad* news?" No! "Behold, I bring you *good* tidings of *great joy*, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour." If those shepherds had been like a good many people at the present time, they would have said, "We do not believe it is good news. It is all excitement. These angels want to get up a revival. These angels are trying to excite us. Don't you believe them." That is what Satan is saying now. "Don't you believe the gospel is good news; it will only make you miserable." He knows the moment a man believes good news, he just receives it. And no one who is under the power of the devil really believes that the gospel is good news. But these shepherds believed the message that the angels brought,

and their hearts were filled with joy. If a boy came with a despatch to some one here, could you not tell by the receiver's looks what kind of a message it was? If it brought good news you would see it in his face in a moment. If it told him that his boy, away in some foreign land, a prodigal son, had come to himself, like the one in the 15th of Luke, do you not think that father's face would light up with joy? And if his wife were here, he would not wait till they got home, or till she asked for it, he would pass it over to her, and her face would brighten too, as she shared his joy. But the tidings that the gospel brings are more glorious than that. We are dead in trespasses and sins, and the gospel offers life. We are enemies to God, and the gospel offers reconciliation. The world is in darkness, and the gospel offers light. Because man will not believe the gospel that Christ is the light of the world, the world is dark to-day. But the moment a man believes, the light from Calvary crosses his path and he walks in an unclouded sun.

I want to tell you why I like the gospel. It is because it has been the very best news I have ever heard. That is just why I like to preach it, because it has done me so much good. No man can ever tell what it has done for him, but I think I can tell what it has *undone*. It has taken out of my path four of the bitterest enemies I ever had.

There is that terrible enemy mentioned in 1 Cor. xv., the last enemy, *Death*. The gospel has taken it out of the way. My mind very often rolls back twenty years ago, before I was converted, and I think how dark it used to seem, as I thought of the future. I well remember how I used to look on death as a terrible monster, how he used to throw his dark shadow across my path; how I trembled as I thought of the terrible hour when he should come for me; how I thought I should like to die of some lingering disease, such as consumption, so that I might know when he was coming. It was the custom in our village to toll from the old church bell the age of any one who died. Death never entered that village and tore away one of the inhabitants but I counted the tolling of the bell. Sometimes it was seventy, sometimes eighty · sometimes it would be away down among the

teens, sometimes it would toll out the death of some one of my own age. It made a solemn impression upon me. I felt a coward then. I thought of the cold hand of death feeling for the cords of life. I thought of being launched forth to spend my eternity in an unknown land.

As I looked into the grave, and saw the sexton throw the earth on the coffin-lid, "Earth to earth; ashes to ashes; dust to dust," it seemed like the death knell to my soul. But that is all changed now. The grave has lost its terror. As I go on towards heaven I can shout, "O death! where is thy sting?" and I hear the answer rolling down from Calvary—"buried in the bosom of the Son of God." He took the sting right out of death for me, and received it into his own bosom. Take a hornet and pluck the sting out; you are not afraid of it after that any more than of a fly. So death has lost its sting. That last enemy has been overcome, and I can look on death as a crushed victim. All that death can get now is this old Adam, and I do not care how quickly I get rid of it. I shall get a glorified body, a resurrection body, a body much better than this. Suppose death should come stealing up into this pulpit, and lay his icy hand upon my heart, and it should cease to throb, I should rise to the better world to be present with the King. The gospel has made an enemy a friend. What a glorious thought, that when you die you but sink into the arms of Jesus, to be borne to the land of everlasting rest! "To die," the apostle says, "is gain." I can imagine when they laid our Lord in Joseph's tomb one might have seen death sitting over that sepulchre, saying, "I have Him; He is my victim. He said He was the resurrection and the life. Now I hold Him in my cold embrace. They thought He was never going to die; but see Him now. He has had to pay tribute to me." Never! The glorious morning comes, the Son of man bursts asunder the bands of death, and rises, a Conqueror, from the grave. "Because I live," He shouts, "ye shall live also." Yes, *ye shall live also*—is it not good news? Ah, my friends, there is no bad news about a gospel which makes it so sweet to live, so sweet to die.

Another terrible enemy that troubled me was *Sin*. What a terrible hour I thought it would be, when my sins from childhood,

every secret thought, every evil desire, everything done in the dark, should be brought to the light, and spread out before an assembled universe! Thank God, these thoughts are gone. The gospel tells me my sins are all put away in Christ. Out of love to me He has taken all my sins and cast them behind his back. That is a safe place for them. God never turns back; He always marches on. He will never see your sins if they are behind his back—that is one of his own illustrations. Satan has to get behind God to find them. How far away are they, and can they ever come back again? "*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.*" Not some of them; He takes them all away. You may pile up your sins till they rise like a dark mountain, and then multiply them by ten thousand for those you cannot think of; and after you have tried to enumerate all the sins you have ever committed, just let me bring one verse in, and that mountain will melt away: "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." In Ireland, some time ago, a teacher asked a little boy if there was anything God could not do; and the little fellow said, "Yes; He cannot see my sins through the blood of Christ." That is just what He cannot do. The blood covers them. Is it not good news that you can get rid of sin? You come to Christ a sinner, and if you receive his gospel your sins are taken away. You are invited to do this; nay, He entreats you to do it. You are invited to make an exchange; to get rid of all your sins, and to take Christ and his righteousness in the place of them. Is not that good news?

There is another enemy which used to trouble me a great deal —*Judgment.* I used to look forward to the terrible day when I should be summoned before God. I could not tell whether I should hear the voice of Christ saying, "Depart from Me, ye cursed," or whether it would be, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And I thought that till he stood before the great white throne no man could tell whether he was to be on the right hand or the left. But the gospel tells me that is already settled: "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." "Verily, verily"—and when you see that word in Scripture, you may know there is something very important coming—"Verily,

verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life, and *shall not* come into condemnation, but *is passed* from death unto life." Well, now, *I* am not coming into judgment for sin. It is no open question. God's word has settled it. Christ was judged for me, and died in my stead, and I go free. He that believeth *hath*—h-a-t-h, hath. Is not that good news? A man prayed for me the other day that I might obtain eternal life *at last.* I could not have said Amen to that. If he meant it in this sense, I obtained eternal life many years ago, when I was converted. What is the gift of God, if it is not eternal life? And what makes the gospel such good news? Is it not that it offers eternal life to every poor sinner who will take it? If an angel came straight from the throne of God, and proclaimed that God had sent him here to offer us any one thing we might ask—that each one should have his own petition granted—what would be your cry? There would be but one response, and the cry would make heaven ring: "Eternal life! eternal life!" Everything else would float away into nothingness. It is life men want, men value most. Let a man worth a million dollars be on a wrecked vessel, and if he could just save his life for six months by giving that million, he would give it in an instant. But the gospel is not a six months' gift. "*The gift of God is eternal life.*" And is it not one of the greatest marvels that men have to stand and plead, and pray and beseech their fellow-men to take this precious gift of God?

My friends, there is one spot on earth where the fear of Death, of Sin, and of Judgment, need never trouble us, the only safe spot on earth where the sinner can stand - Calvary. Out in our western country, in the autumn, when men go hunting, and there has not been any rain for months, sometimes the prairie grass catches fire. Sometimes, when the wind is strong, the flames may be seen rolling along, twenty feet high, destroying man and beast in their onward rush. When the frontiersmen see what is coming, what do they do to escape? They know they cannot run as fast as that fire can run. Not the fleetest horse can escape it. They just take a match and light the grass around them. The flames sweep onwards; they take their stand in the burnt district, and are safe. They hear the flames roar as they

come along; they see death bearing down upon them with resistless fury, but they do not fear. They do not even tremble as the ocean of flame surges around them, for over the place where they stand the fire has already passed, and there is no danger. There is nothing for the fire to burn. And there is one spot on earth that God has swept over. Eighteen hundred years ago the storm burst on Calvary, and the Son of God took it into his own bosom, and now, if we take our stand by the Cross, we are safe for time and for eternity.

Sinner, would you be safe to-night? Would you be free from the condemnation of the sins that are past, from the power of the temptations that are to come? Then take your stand on the Rock of Ages. Let death, let the grave, let the judgment come, the victory is Christ's, and yours through Him. Oh, will you not receive this gospel to-night—this wonderful message of his sacrifice for you?

Some people, when the gospel is preached, put on a long face, as if they had to attend a funeral or witness an execution, or hear some dry, stupid lecture or sermon. It was my privilege to go into Richmond with General Grant's army. I had not been long there before it was announced that the negroes were going to have a jubilee meeting. These coloured people were just coming into liberty; their chains were falling off, and they were just awakening to the fact that they were free. I thought it would be a great event, and I went down to the African Church, one of the largest in the South, and found it crowded. One of the coloured chaplains of a northern regiment had offered to speak. I have heard many eloquent men in Europe and in America but I do not think I ever heard eloquence such as I heard that day He said, "Mothers! you rejoice to-day; you are for ever free! That little child has been torn from your embrace, and sold off to some distant state for the last time. Your hearts are never to be broken again in that way; you are free." The women clapped their hands and shouted at the top of their voices, "Glory, glory to God!" It was good news to them, and they believed it. It filled them full of joy. Then he turned to the young men, and said, "Young men! you rejoice to-day; you have heard the crack of the slave-driver's whip for the last time; your posterity shall be free; young

men rejoice to-day, you are for ever free!" And they clapped their hands, and shouted, "Glory to God!" They believed the good tidings. "Young maidens!" he said, "you rejoice to-day. You have been put on the auction-block and sold for the last time; you are free—for ever free!" They believed it, and lifting up their voices, shouted, "Glory be to God!" I never was in such a meeting. They *believed* that it was good news to them.

My friends, I bring you better tidings than that. No coloured man or woman ever had such a mean, wicked, cruel master as those that are serving Satan. Do I speak to a man who is a slave to strong drink? Christ can give you strength to hurl the cup from you, and make you a sober man, a loving husband, a kind father. Yes, poor wife of the drunkard, He gives you good news; your husband may become a sober man again. And you, poor sinner, you who have been so rebellious and wayward, the gospel brings a message of forgiveness to you. God wants you to be reconciled to Him. "Be ye reconciled unto God." It is his message to you—a message of friendship. Here is a little story of reconciliation which I was told lately; perhaps it may help you a little:—

There was an Englishman who had an only son; and only sons are often petted, and humoured, and ruined. This boy became very headstrong, and very often he and his father had trouble. One day they had a quarrel, and the father was very angry, and so was the son; and the father said he wished the boy would leave home and never come back. The boy said he would go, and would not come into his father's house again till he sent for him. The father said he would never send for him. Well, away went the boy. But when a father gives up a boy, a mother does not. You mothers will understand that, but the fathers may not. You know there is no love on earth so strong as a mother's love. A great many things may separate a man and his wife; a great many things may separate a father from a son; but there is nothing in the wide world that can ever separate a true mother from her child. To be sure, there are some mothers that have drunk so much liquor, that they have drunk up all their affection. But I am talking about a true mother; and she would never cast off her boy.

Well, the mother began to write, and plead with the boy to

write to his father first, and he would forgive him; but the boy said, "I will never go home till father asks me." Then she pled with the father, but the father said, "No, I will never ask him." At last the mother came down to her sick-bed, broken-hearted, and when she was given up by the physicians to die, the husband, anxious to gratify her last wish, wanted to know if there was nothing he could do for her before she died. The mother gave him a look; he well knew what it meant. Then she said, "Yes, there is one thing you can do. You can send for my boy. That is the only wish on earth you can gratify. If you do not pity him and love him when I am dead and gone, who will?" "Well," said the father, "I will send word to him that you want to see him." "No," she says, "you know he will not come for me. If ever I see him you must send for him." At last the father went to his office and wrote a despatch in his own name, asking the boy to come home. As soon as he got the invitation from his father he started off to see his dying mother. When he opened the door to go in he found his mother dying, and his father by the bedside. The father heard the door open, and saw the boy, but instead of going to meet him he went to another part of the room, and refused to speak to him. His mother seized his hand—how she had longed to press it! She kissed him, and then said, "Now, my son, just speak to your father. You speak first, and it will all be over." But the boy said, "No, mother, I will not speak to him until he speaks to me." She took her husband's hand in one hand and the boy's in the other, and spent her dying moments in trying to bring about a reconciliation. Then just as she was expiring—she could not speak—so she put the hand of the wayward boy into the hand of the father, and passed away! The boy looked at the mother, and the father at the wife, and at last the father's heart broke, and he opened his arms, and took that boy to his bosom, and by that body they were reconciled. Sinner, that is only a faint type, a poor illustration, because God is not angry with you. I bring you to-night to the dead body of Christ. I ask you to look at the wounds in his hands and feet, and the wound in his side. And *I* ask you, "Will you not be reconciled?" When He left heaven, He went down into the manger that He might get hold of the vilest sinner, and put the

hand of the wayward prodigal into that of the Father, and He died that you and I might be reconciled. If you take my advice you will not sleep to-night until you are reconciled. "Be ye reconciled." Oh, this gospel of reconciliation! My friends, is it not a glad gospel?

And then it is a *free* gospel; any one may have it. You need not ask, "For whom is this good news." It is for yourself. If you would like Christ's own word for it, come with me to that scene in Jerusalem where the disciples are bidding Him farewell. Calvary with all its horrors is behind Him; Gethsemane is over, and Pilate's judgment hall. He has passed the grave, and is about to take his place at the right hand of the Father. Around Him stands his little band of disciples, the little church He was to leave behind Him to be his witnesses. The hour of parting has come, and He has some "last words" for them. Is He thinking about Himself in these closing moments? Is He thinking about the throne that is waiting Him, and the Father's smile that will welcome Him to heaven? Is He going over in memory the scenes of the past; or is He thinking of the friends who have followed Him so far, who will miss Him so much when He is gone? No, He is thinking about *you*. You imagined He would think of those who loved Him? No, sinner, He thought of you then. He thought of his enemies, those who shunned Him, those who despised Him, those who killed Him—He thought what more He could do for them. He thought of those who would hate Him, of those who would have none of his gospel, of those who would say it was too good to be true, of those who would make excuse that He never died for *them*. And then turning to his disciples, his heart just bursting with compassion, He gives them his farewell charge, "Go ye into ALL the world and preach the gospel TO EVERY CREATURE." They are almost his last words, "to every creature."

I can imagine Peter saying, "Lord, do you really mean that we shall preach the gospel to *every* creature?" "Yes, Peter." "Shall we go back to Jerusalem and preach the gospel to those Jerusalem sinners who murdered you?" "Yes, Peter, go back and tarry there until you are endued with power from on high,

Offer the gospel to them first. Go search out that man who spat in my face; tell him I forgive him; there is nothing in my heart but love for him. Go, search out the man who put that cruel crown of thorns on my brow; tell him I will have a crown ready for him in my kingdom, if he will accept salvation; there shall not be a thorn in it, and he shall wear it for ever and ever in the kingdom of his Redeemer. Find out that man who took the reed from my hand, and smote my head, driving the thorns deeper into my brow. If he will accept salvation as a gift, I will give him a sceptre, and he shall sway it over the nations of the earth. Yes, I will give him to sit with Me upon my throne. Go, seek that man who struck Me with the palm of his hand; find him, and preach the gospel to him; tell him that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and my blood was shed for him freely." Yes, I can imagine Him saying, "Go, seek out that poor soldier who drove the spear into my side; tell him that there is a nearer way to my heart than that. Tell him that I forgive him freely; and tell him I will make him a soldier of the cross, and my banner over him shall be love."

I thank God that the gospel is to be preached to *every* creature. I thank God the commission is so free. There is no man so far gone, but the grace of God can reach him; no man so desperate or so black, but He can forgive him. Yes, I thank God I can preach the gospel to the man or the woman who is as black as hell itself. I thank God for the "whosoevers" of the invitations of Christ. "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," and "*Whosoever will,* let him take the water of life freely."

I heard of a woman once who thought there was no promise in the Bible for her, they were all for other people. One day she got a letter, and when she opened it, found it was not for her at all, but for some other woman of the same name. It led her to ask herself, "If I should find some promise in the Bible directed to *me,* how should I know that it meant *me,* and not some other woman?" And she found out that she must just take God at his word, and include herself among the "whosoevers" and the "every creatures" to whom the gospel is freely preached. I know that word "whosoever" means every man, every woman, every child

in this wide world. It means that boy down there, that grey-haired man, that maiden in the blush of youth, that young man breaking a mother's heart, that drunkard steeped in misery and sin. Oh, my friends, will you not believe this good news? Will you not receive this wonderful gospel of Christ? Will you not believe, poor sinner, that it means *you?* Will you say it is too good to be true?

I was in Ohio a few years ago, and was invited to preach in the State prison. Eleven hundred convicts were brought into the chapel, and all sat in front of me. After I had got through the preaching, the chaplain said to me: "Mr. Moody, I want to tell you of a scene which occurred in this room. A few years ago, our commissioners went to the governor of the State, and got him to promise that he would pardon five men for good behaviour. The governor consented, with this understanding—that the record was to be kept secret, and that at the end of six months the five men highest on the roll should receive a pardon, regardless of who or what they were. At the end of six months the prisoners were all brought into the chapel; the commissioners came up, and the President stood up on the platform, and putting his hand in his pocket, brought out some papers, and said, 'I hold in my hand pardons for five men.'" The chaplain told me he never witnessed anything on earth like it. Every man was as still as death; many were deadly pale, and the suspense was awful; it seemed as if every heart had ceased to beat. The commissioner went on to tell them how they had got the pardon; but the chaplain interrupted him. "Before you make your speech, read out the names. This suspense is awful." So he read out the first name, "Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon;" and he held it out, but none came forward. He said to the governor, "Are all the prisoners here?" The governor told him they were all there. Then he said again, "Reuben Johnson will come and get his pardon. It is signed and sealed by the governor. He is a free man." Not one moved. The chaplain told me he looked right down where Reuben was; he was well known; he had been nineteen years there, and many were looking round to see him spring to his feet. But he himself was looking round to see the fortunate man who had got his pardon. Finally the chaplain caught his eye

and said, "Reuben, you are the man." Reuben turned round and looked behind him to see where Reuben was. The chaplain said the second time, "Reuben, *you* are the man;" and the second time he looked round, thinking it must be some other Reuben. So men do not believe the gospel is for them. They think it is too good, and pass it over their shoulders to the next man. But *you* are the man to-night. Well, the chaplain could see where Reuben was, and he had to say three times, "Reuben, come and get your pardon." At last the truth began to steal over the old man; he got up and came along down the hall, trembling from head to foot, and when he got the pardon he looked at it, and went back to his seat, and buried his face in his hands, and wept. When the prisoners got into the ranks to go back to the cells, Reuben got into the ranks too, and the chaplain had to call to him, "Reuben, get out of the ranks; you are a free man, you are no longer a prisoner." And Reuben stepped out of the ranks. He was free! That is the way men make out pardons. They make them out for good character or good behaviour. But God makes out pardons for men who have not got any character, who have been very, very bad. He offers a pardon to every sinner on earth if he will take it. I do not care who he is or what he is like. He may be the greatest libertine that ever walked the streets, or the greatest blackguard who ever lived, or the greatest drunkard, or thief, or vagabond; but I come to-night with glad tidings, and preach the gospel to *every creature.*

IV.

CHRIST SEEKING SINNERS.

"THE SON OF MAN IS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST."—LUKE XIX. 10.

To me this is one of the sweetest verses in the whole Bible. In this one little short sentence we are told what Christ came into this world for. He came for a purpose; He came to do a work, and in this little verse the whole story is told. He came not to condemn the world, but that the world, through Him, might be saved.

A few years ago, the Prince of Wales came to America, and there was great excitement about this Crown Prince coming to our country. The papers took it up, and began to discuss it, and a great many were wondering what he came for. Was it to look into the republican government? Was it for his health? Was it to see our institutions? or for this, or for that? He came, and went, but he never told us what he came for. But when the Prince of Heaven came down into this world, He told us what He came for. God sent Him, and He came to do the will of His Father. What was that? "To seek and to save that which was lost." And you cannot find any place in Scripture where a man was ever sent by God to do a work in which he failed. God sent Moses to Egypt to bring three millions of bondmen up out of the house of bondage into the promised land. Did he fail? It looked, at first, as if he were going to. If we had been in the Court when Pharaoh said to Moses, "Who is God, that I should obey Him?" and ordered him out of his presence, we might have thought it meant failure. But did it? God sent Elijah to stand before Ahab, and it was a bold thing when he told

him there should be neither dew nor rain; but didn't he lock up the heavens for three years and six months? Now here is God sending his own beloved Son from his bosom, from the throne, down into this world. Do you think He is going to fail? Thanks be to God, He can save to the uttermost, and there is not a man in this city who may not find it so, if he is willing to be saved.

I find a great blessing to myself in taking up a passage like this, and looking all round it, to see what brought it out. If you look back to the close of the eighteenth chapter, you will find Christ coming near the city of Jericho. And, sitting by the wayside, was a poor, blind beggar. Perhaps he has been there for years, led out, it may be, by one of his children, or perhaps, as we sometimes see, he had got a dog to lead him out. There he had sat for years, and his cry had been, "Please give a poor, blind man a farthing." One day, as he was sitting there, a man came down from Jerusalem, and seeing the poor blind man, took his seat by his side, and said, "Bartimeus, I have good news for you." "What is it?" said the blind beggar. "There is a man in Israel who is able to give you sight." "Oh no," said the blind beggar, "there is no chance of my ever receiving sight. I was born blind, and nobody born blind ever got sight. I shall never see in this world; I may in the world to come, but I must go through this world blind." "But," said the man, "let me tell you, I was at Jerusalem the other day, and the great Galilean prophet was there, and I saw a man who was born blind that had received his sight; and I never saw a man with better sight. He does not need to use glasses; he can see quite clear." Then for the first time, hope rises in the poor man's heart, and he asks "How was it done?" "Why, Jesus spat on the ground and made some clay, and anointed his eyes," (why, that is enough to put a man's sight out, even if he can see!) "and sent him to wash in the pool of Siloam, and while he was doing so, he got two good eyes. Yes, it is so. I talked with him, and I didn't see a man in all Jerusalem who had better sight." "What did He charge?" says Bartimeus. "Nothing. There was no fee or doctor's bill; he got his sight for nothing. You just tell Him what you want; you don't need to have an influential committee to call on Him, or any important deputation. The poor have as much influence with Him as the

rich; all are alike." "What is his name?" asks Bartimeus. "Jesus of Nazareth. And if He ever comes this way, don't you let Him by, without getting your case laid before Him." And the blind man says "That you may be sure of; He shall never pass this way without my seeking Him."

A day or two after, he is led out, and takes his seat at the usual place, still crying out for money. All at once, he hears the footsteps of a coming multitude, and begins to cry, "Who is it?" "Tell me, who is it?" Some one said it was Jesus of Nazareth that was passing by. The moment he hears that, he says to himself, "Why, that is the man who gives sight to the blind," and he lifted up his cry, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me!" I don't know who it was—perhaps it was Peter—who said to the man, "Hush! keep still." He thought the Lord was going up to Jerusalem to be crowned King, and He would not like to be disturbed by a poor blind beggar. Oh they did not know the Son of God when He was here! He would hush every harp in heaven to hear a sinner pray; no music delights Him so much. But Bartimeus lifted up his voice louder, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." His prayer reached the ear of the Son of God, as prayer always will, and His footsteps were arrested. He told them to bring the man. "Bartimeus," they said, "be of good cheer, arise, He calleth thee;" and He never called any one, but He had something good in store for him. Oh, sinner! remember that to-night. They led the blind man to Jesus. The Lord says, "What shall I do for you?" "Lord, that I may receive my sight." "You shall have it," the Lord said; and straightway his eyes were opened.

I should have liked to have been there, to see that wonderful scene. The first object that met his gaze was the Son of God Himself, and now among the shouting multitude, no one shouts louder than the poor blind man that has got his sight. He glorifies God, and I fancy I can hear him shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David," more sweetly than Mr. Sankey can sing.

Pardon me, if I now draw a little on my imagination. Bartimeus gets into Jericho, and he says, "I will go and see my wife, and tell her about it." A young convert always wants to talk to his friends about salvation. Away he goes

down the street, and he meets a man who passes him, goes on a few yards, and then turns round and says, "Bartimeus, is that you?" "Yes." "Well, I thought it was, but I could not believe my eyes. How have you got your sight?" "Oh, I just met Jesus of Nazareth outside the city, and asked Him to have mercy on me." "Jesus of Nazareth! What, is He in this part of the country?" "Yes He is right here in Jericho. He is now going down to the western gate." "I should like to see Him," says the man, and away he runs down the street; but he cannot catch a glimpse of Him, even though he stands on tiptoe, being little of stature, and on account of the great throng around Him. "Well," he says, "I am not going to be disappointed;" so he runs on, and climbs up into a sycamore tree. "If I can get on to that branch, hanging right over the highway, He cannot pass without my getting a good look at Him." That must have been a very strange sight to see the rich man climbing up a tree like a boy, and hiding among the leaves, where he thought nobody would see him, to get a glimpse of the passing stranger! There is the crowd bursting out, and he looks for Jesus. He looks at Peter; "That's not Him." He looks at John; "That's not Him." At last his eye rested on One fairer than the sons of men; "That's Him!" And Zaccheus, just peeping out from among the branches, looks down upon the wonderful God-man in amazement. At last the crowd comes to the tree; it looks as if Christ were going by; but He stops right under the tree, looks up, and says, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down." I can imagine, the first thought in his mind was, "Who told Him my name? I was never introduced to Him." Ah! He knew him. Sinner, Christ knows all about you. He knows your name and your house. You need not try to hide from Him. He knows where you are, and all about you.

Some people do not believe in sudden conversion. I should like them to answer me when was Zaccheus converted? He was certainly in his sins when he went up into that tree; he certainly was converted when he came down. He must have been converted somewhere between the branch and the ground. It didn't take a long while to convert that publican! "Make haste and come down. I shall never pass this way again; this is my last

visit." Zaccheus made haste, and came down and received Him joyfully. Did you ever hear of any one receiving Christ in any other way? He received Him joyfully. Christ brings joy with Him. Sin, gloom, and darkness flee away; light, peace, and joy burst into the soul. May there be many that shall come down from their high places, and receive Christ to-night!

Some one may ask, "How do you know that he was converted?" I think he gave very good evidence. I would like to see as fruitful evidence of conversion here to-night. Let some of you rich men be converted, and give half your goods to feed the poor, and people will believe pretty quickly that it is genuine work! But there is better evidence even than that. "If I have taken anything from any man falsely, *I restore him fourfold.*" Very good evidence that. You say if people are converted suddenly, they won't hold out. Zaccheus held out long enough to restore fourfold. We should like to have a work that reaches men's pockets. I can imagine one of his servants going to a neighbour next morning, with a check for $100, and handing it over. "What is this for?" "Oh, my master defrauded you of $25 a few years ago, and this is restitution money." That would give confidence in Zaccheus' conversion! I wish a few cases like that would happen now, and then people would stop talking against sudden conversions.

The Lord goes to be the publican's guest, and while He is there the Pharisees began to murmur and complain. It would have been a good thing if Pharisees had died off with that generation; but, unfortunately, they have left a good many grandchildren, living down here in the afternoon of this nineteenth century, who are ever complaining, "This man receiveth *sinners.*" But while the Pharisees were complaining, the Lord uttered the text I have to-night, "I did not come to Zaccheus to make him wretched, to condemn him, to torment him; I came to bless and save him. *The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*"

If there is a man or woman in this audience to-night who believes that he or she is *lost*, I have good news to tell you—Christ is come after you. I was at the Fulton Street prayer-meeting, a good many years ago, one Saturday night, and when the meeting was over, a man came to me, and said, "I would like to have you go down to the

city prison to-morrow, and preach to the prisoners. I said I would be very glad to go. There was no chapel in connection with that prison, and I was to preach to them in their cells. I had to stand at a little iron railing and talk down a great, long narrow passage way, to some three or four hundred of them, I suppose, all out of sight. It was pretty difficult work; I never preached to the bare walls before. When it was over I thought I would like to see to whom I had been preaching, and how they had received the gospel. I went to the first door, where the inmates could have heard me best, and looked in at a little window, and there were some men playing cards. I suppose they had been playing all the while. "How is it with you here?" I said. "Well, stranger, we don't want you to get a bad idea of us. False witnesses swore a lie, and that is how we are here." "Oh," I said, "Christ cannot save anybody here; there is nobody *lost*." I went to the next cell. "Well, friend, how is it with you?" "Oh," said the prisoner, "the man that did the deed looked very much like me, so they caught me and I am here." He was innocent too! I passed along to the next cell. "How is it with you?" "Well, we got into bad company, and the man that did it got clear, and we got taken up, but we never did anything." I went along to the next cell. "How is it with you?" "Our trial comes on next week, but they have nothing against us, and we'll get free." I went round nearly every cell, but the answer was always the same—they had never done anything. Why, I never saw so many innocent men together in my life! There was nobody to blame but the magistrates, according to their way of it. These men were wrapping their filthy rags of self-righteousness about them. And that has been the story for six thousand years. I got discouraged as I went through the prison, on, and on, and on, cell after cell, and every man had an excuse. If he hadn't one, the devil helped him to make one. I had got almost through the prison, when I came to a cell and found a man with his elbows on his knees, and his head in his hands. Two little streams of tears were running down his cheeks; they did not come by *drops* that time.

"What's the trouble?" I said. He looked up the picture of remorse and despair. "Oh, my sins are more than I can bear." "Thank God for that," I replied. "What," said he, "you are the man that has been preaching to us, ain't you?" "Yes." "I

think you said you were a *friend?*" "I am." "And yet you are glad that my sins are more than I can bear!" "I will explain," I said; "if your sins are more than you can bear, won't you cast them on One who will bear them for you?" "Who's that?" "The Lord Jesus." "He won't bear *my* sins." "Why not?" "I have sinned against Him all my life." "I don't care if you have; the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanses from all sin." Then I told him how Christ had come to seek and save that which was lost; to open the prison doors and set the captives free. It was like a cup of refreshment to find a man who believed he was lost, so I stood there, and held up a crucified Saviour to him. "Christ was delivered for our offences, died for our sins, rose again for our justification." For a long time the man could not believe that such a miserable wretch could be saved. He went on to enumerate his sins, and I told him that the blood of Christ could cover them all. After I had talked with him I said, "Now let us pray." He got down on his knees inside the cell, and I got down outside, and I said, "You pray." "Why," he said, "it would be blasphemy for me to call on God." "You call on God," I said. He knelt down, and, like the poor publican, he lifted up his voice and said, "God be merciful to me, a vile wretch!" I put my hand through the window, and as I shook hands with him a tear fell on my hand that burned down into my soul. It was a tear of repentance. He believed he was lost. Then I tried to get him to believe that Christ had come to save him. I left him still in darkness. "I will be at the hotel," I said, "between nine and ten o'clock, and I will pray for you." Next morning, I felt so much interested in him, that I thought I must see him before I went back to Chicago. No sooner had my eye lighted on his face, than I saw that remorse and despair had fled away, and his countenance was beaming with celestial light; the tears of joy had come into his eyes, and the tears of despair were gone. The Sun of Righteousness had broken out across his path; his soul was leaping within him for joy; he had received Christ as Zaccheus did, joyfully. "Tell me about it," I said. "Well, I do not know what time it was; I think it was about midnight. I had been in distress a long time, when all at once my great burden fell off, and now, I believe I am the happiest man in New York."

I think he was the happiest man I saw, from the time I left Chicago till I got back again. His face was lighted up with the light that comes from the celestial hills. I bade him good-bye, and I expect to meet him in another world.

Can you tell me why the Son of God came down to that prison that night, and, passing cell after cell, went to that one, and set the captive free? It was because the man believed he was lost.

But you say, "*I* do not feel that." Well, never mind your feelings; *believe* it. Just ask yourself, "Am I saved, or am I lost?" It must be one or the other. There is no neutrality about the matter. A man cannot be saved and lost at the same time; it is impossible. Every man and woman in this audience must either be saved or lost, if the Bible be true; and if I thought it was not true, I should not be here preaching, and I would not advise you people to come; but if the Bible is true, every man and every woman in this room must either be in the ark or out of it, either *saved* or *lost*.

I do not believe there would be a dry eye in this city to-night, if we would but wake up to the thought of what it is to be lost. The world has been rocked to sleep by Satan, who is going up and down and telling people that it doesn't mean anything. I believe in the old-fashioned heaven and hell. Christ came down to save us from a terrible hell, and any man who is cast down to hell from here must go in the full blaze of the gospel, and over the mangled body of the Son of God.

We hear of a man who has lost his health, and we sympathize with him, and we say it is very sad. Our hearts are drawn out in sympathy. Here is another man who has lost his wealth, and we say, "That is very sad." Here is another man who has lost his reputation, his standing among men. "That is sadder still," you say We know what it is to lose health and wealth, and reputation, but what is the loss of all these things compared with the loss of the soul?

I was in an eye-infirmary in Chicago some time ago, before the great fire. A mother brought a beautiful little babe to the doctor—a babe only a few months old—and wanted the doctor to look at the child's eyes. He did so, and pronounced it blind—blind for life—it will never see again. The moment he said that, the mother seized it, pressed it to her bosom, and gave a terrible scream. It

pierced my heart, and I could not but weep; the doctor wept; we could not help it. "Oh, my darling," she cried, "are you never to see the mother that gave you birth? Oh, doctor, I cannot stand it. My child, my child!" It was a sight to move any heart. But what is the loss of eyesight to the loss of a soul? I had a thousand times rather have these eyes taken out of my head and go to the grave blind, than lose my soul. I have a son, and no one but God knows how I love him; but I would see those eyes dug out of his head to-night rather than see him grow up to manhood and go down to the grave without Christ and without hope. The loss of a soul! Christ knew what it meant. That is what brought Him from the bosom of the Father; that is what brought Him from the throne; that is what brought Him to Calvary. The Son of God was in earnest. When He died on Calvary it was to save a lost world; it was to save your soul and mine.

O the loss of the soul—how terrible it is! If you are lost to-night, I beseech you do not rest until you have found peace in Christ. Fathers and mothers, if you have children out of the Ark, do not rest until they are brought into it. Do not discourage your children from coming to Christ. I am glad to see those little boys and girls here. Dear children, remember the sermon is for *you*. The Son of Man came for you as much as for that old grey-haired man, yonder. He came for all, rich and poor, young and old. Young man, if you are lost may God show it to you, and may you press into the kingdom. The Son of Man is come to seek and to save you.

There is a story told of Rowland Hill. He was once preaching in the open air to a vast audience. Lady Anne Erskine was riding by, and she asked who it was that was addressing the vast assembly. She was told it was the celebrated Rowland Hill Says she, "I have heard of him; drive me near the platform, that I may listen to him." The eye of Rowland Hill rested on her; he saw that she belonged to royalty, and turning to some one, he inquired who she was. He went on preaching, and all at once he stopped. "My friends," he said, "I have got something here for sale." Everybody was startled to think that a minister was going to sell something in his sermon. "I am going to sell it by auction, and it is worth more than the crown of all Europe: it is the soul of

Lady Anne Erskine. Will any one bid for her soul? Hark! methinks I hear a bid. Who bids? Satan bids. What will you give? I will give riches, honour, and pleasure; yea, I will give the whole world for her soul. Hark! I hear another bid for this soul. Who bids? The Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus, what will you give for this soul? I will give peace, and joy, and comfort that the world knows not of; yea, I will give eternal life for her soul." Turning to Lady Anne Erskine, he said, "You have heard the two bidders for your soul—which shall have it?" She ordered the footman to open the door, and pushing her way through the crowd, she says, "The Lord Jesus shall have my soul, if He will accept it." That may be true, or it may not; but there is one thing I *know* to be true—there are two bidders for your soul to-night. It is for you to decide which shall have it. Satan offers you what he cannot give; he is a liar, and has been from the foundation of the world. I pity the man who is living on the devil's promises. He lied to Adam, and deceived him, stripped him of all he had, and then left him in his lost, ruined condition. And all the men since Adam, living on the devil's lies, the devil's promises, have been disappointed, and will be, down to the end of the chapter. But the Lord Jesus Christ is able to give all He offers, and He offers eternal life to every lost soul here. "The gift of God is eternal life. Who will have it? Will any one flash it over the wires, and let it go up to the throne of God, that you want to be saved? As Mr. Sankey sang of that shout around the throne, my heart went up to God, that there might be a great shout for lost ones brought home to-night.

Some time since a man told me he was anxious to be saved, but Christ had never sought for him. I said, "What are you waiting for?" "Why," he said, "I am waiting for Christ to call me; as soon as He calls me, I am coming." There may be others here who have got the same notion. Now, I do not believe there is a man in this land that the Spirit of God has not striven with at some period of his life. I do not believe there is a person in this audience but Christ has sought after him. Bear in mind, He takes the place of the seeker. Every man who has ever been saved through these six thousand years was first sought after by God. No sooner did Adam fall, than God sought him. He

had gone away frightened, and hid himself away among the bushes in the garden, but God took the place of the Seeker; and from that day to this God has always had the place of the Seeker. No man or woman in this audience has been saved but that He sought them first.

What do we read in the fifteenth chapter of St. Luke? There is a shepherd bringing home his sheep into the fold. As they pass in, he stands and numbers them. I can see him counting one, two, three, up to ninety-nine. "But," says he, "I ought to have a hundred; I must have made a mistake;" and he counts them over again. "There are only ninety-nine here; I must have lost one." He does not say, "I will let him find his own way back." No! He takes the place of the Seeker; he goes out into the mountain, and hunts until he finds the lost one, and then he lays it on his shoulder and brings it home. Is it the sheep that finds the shepherd? No, it is the shepherd that finds and brings back the sheep. He rejoiced to find it. Undoubtedly the sheep was very glad to get back to the fold, but it was the shepherd who rejoiced, and who called his friends and said, "Rejoice with me."

Then there is that woman who lost the piece of money. Some one perhaps had paid her a bill that day, giving her ten pieces of silver. As she retires at night, she takes the money out of her pocket and counts it. "Why," she says, "I have only got nine pieces; I ought to have ten." She counts it over again. "Only nine pieces! Where have I been," she says, "since I got that money? I am sure I have not been out of the house." She turns her pocket wrong side out, and there she finds a hole in it. Does she wait until the money gets back into her pocket? No. She takes a broom, and lights a candle, and sweeps diligently. She moves the sofa and the table and the chairs, and all the rest of the furniture, and sweeps in every corner until she finds it. And when she has found it, who rejoices? The piece of money? No; the woman who finds it. In these parables, Christ brings out the great truth that God takes the place of Seeker. People talk of finding Christ, but it is Christ who first finds them.

Another young man told me one night that he was too great a sinner to be saved. Why, they are the very men Christ came after. "This Man receiveth sinners and eateth with them." The only

charge they could bring against Christ down here was, that He was receiving bad men. They are the very kind of men He is willing to receive. All you have got to do is, to prove that you are a sinner, and I will prove that you have got a Saviour. And the greater the sinner, the greater need you have of a Saviour. You say your heart is hard; well, then, of course, you want Christ to soften it. You cannot do it yourself. The harder your heart, the more need you have of Christ; the blacker you are, the more need you have of a Saviour. If your sins rise up before you like a dark mountain, bear in mind that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. There is no sin so big, or so black, or so corrupt and vile, but the blood of Christ can cover it. So I preach the old gospel again, "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

It was Adam's fall, his *loss*, that brought out God's love. God never told Adam when He put him into Eden, that He loved him. It was his fall, his sin, that brought it out. A friend of mine from Manchester was in Chicago a few years ago, and he was very much interested in the city—a great city, with its 300,000 or 400,000 inhabitants, with its great railway centres, its lumber market, its pork market, and its grain market. He said he went back to Manchester and told his friends about Chicago. But he could not get anybody very much interested in it. It was a great many hundreds of miles away; and the people did not seem to care for hearing about it. But one day there came flashing along the wire the sad tidings that it was on fire; and, my friend said, the Manchester people became suddenly interested in Chicago! Every despatch that came they read; they bought up the papers, and devoured every particle of news. And at last, when the despatch came that Chicago was burning up, that 100,000 people were turned out of house and home, then every one became so interested that they began to weep for us. They came forward and laid down their money—some gave hundreds of dollars for the relief of the poor sufferers. It was the *calamity* of Chicago that brought out the love of Manchester, and of London, and of Liverpool. I was in that terrible fire, and I saw men that were wealthy stripped of all they had. That Sunday night, when they retired, they were the richest men in Chicago. Next morning they were paupers. But I did not see a man weep. But when the

news came flashing along the wire, "Liverpool gives ten thousand dollars; Manchester sends five thousand dollars; London is giving money to aid the city;" and as the news kept flashing that help was coming, our city was broken-hearted. I saw men weep then. The love that was shown us broke our hearts. So the love of God ought to break every heart in this city. It was love that brought Christ down here to die for us. It was love that made Him leave His place by the Father's throne and come down here *to seek and to save that which was lost.*

But now for the sake of these men who believe Christ never sought them, perhaps it would be well to say *how* He seeks. There are a great many ways in which He does so. One night I found a man in the inquiry-room, and the Lord had been speaking to him by the prayers of a godly sister who died a little while ago. Her prayers were answered. He came into the inquiry-room trembling from head to foot. I talked to him about the plan of salvation, and the tears trickled down his cheeks, and at last he took Christ as his Saviour. The Son of Man sought out that young man through the prayers of his sister, and then through her death.

Some of you have godly, praying mothers, who have prayed whole nights for your soul, and who have now gone to heaven. Did not you take their hand and promise that you would meet them there? That was the Son of God seeking you by your mother's prayers and your mother's death. Some of you have got faithful, godly ministers who weep for you in the pulpit, and plead with you to come to Christ. You have heard heart-searching sermons, and the truth has gone down deep into your heart, and tears have come down your cheeks. That was the Son of God seeking you. Some of you have had godly, praying Sabbath-school teachers and superintendents, urging you to come to Christ. Some of you, perhaps, have got young men converted round you, and they have talked with you and pleaded with you to come to Christ. That was the Son of God seeking after your soul. Some of you have had a tract put in your hand with a startling title, "Eternity; Where will You Spend It?" and the arrow has gone home. That was the Son of God seeking after you. Many of you have been laid on a bed of sickness, when you had time to think and meditate. And in the silent watches of the night, when everybody was asleep

the Spirit of God has come into your chamber, has come to your bedside, and the thought came stealing through your mind that you ought to be a child of God and an heir of heaven. That was the Son of God seeking after your lost soul. Some of you have had little children, and you have laid them yonder in the cemetery. When that little child was dying you promised to love and serve God (ah, Have you kept your promise?) That was the Son of God seeking you. He took that little child yonder to draw your affections heavenwards.

It would take me all night to tell the different ways in which the Lord seeks. Can you rise in this hall to-night and say that the Son of God never sought for *you?* I do not believe there is a man or woman in this audience or in the whole city who could do it. My friend, He has been calling for you from your earliest childhood, and He has put it into the hearts of God's own people just to call you together in this hall. Prayer is going up all over the Christian world for you. Perhaps there never has been a time in the history of your life when so many were praying for you as at the present time. That is the Son of God seeking for your soul through the prayers of the Church, through the prayers of ministers, through the prayers of the saints not only about you but throughout the world. I am receiving letters almost daily from both sides of the ocean saying continual prayer is going up to God for this work. What does it mean? God has laid it upon the heart of the Church throughout the world to pray for the work. It must be that God has something good in store for this city; the Son of of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost; and I pray that the Good Shepherd may enter this hall to-night and may come to many a heart, and that you may hear the still small voice: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with Me." O friends, open the door to-night, and let the heavenly Visitor in. Do not turn Him away any longer. Do not say with Felix, "Go thy way this time, and when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." Make this a convenient season; make this the night of your salvation. Receive the gift of God to-night, and open the door of your heart, and say, "Welcome, thrice welcome into this heart of mine."

V.

SINNERS SEEKING CHRIST.

"SEEK THE LORD WHILE HE MAY BE FOUND; CALL YE UPON HIM WHILE HE IS NEAR."—ISAI H LV. 6.

I HAVE been speaking about the Son of Man seeking the lost; but now I want to take up the other side of the case—man's side. I have learned this, that when any one becomes in earnest about his soul's salvation he begins to seek God, and it does not take a great while for them to meet; it does not take long for an anxious sinner to meet an anxious Saviour. What do we read in the 29th chapter of Jeremiah, 13th verse? "Ye shall seek Me and find Me when ye shall search for Me *with all your heart.*" These are the men who find Christ—those who seek for Him with all their heart. I am tired and sick of half-heartedness. You don't like a half-hearted man; you don't care for any one to love you with a half heart, and the Lord won't have it. If we are going to seek for Him and find Him, we must do it with all our heart. I believe the reason why so few people find Christ is because they do not search for Him with all their heart; they are not *terribly* in earnest about their soul's salvation. *God* is in earnest; everything God has done proves that He is in earnest about the salvation of men's souls. He has proved it by giving his only Son to die for us. The Son of God was in earnest when He died. What is Calvary but a proof of that? And the Lord wants us to be in earnest when it comes to this great question of the soul's salvation. I never saw men seeking Him with all their hearts but they soon found Him.

It was quite refreshing, one night, to find in the inquiry-room a young man who thought he was not worth saving, he was so vile and wicked. There was hope for him because he was so des-

perately in earnest about his soul. He thought he was worthless. He had got a sight of himself in God's looking-glass, and when a man does that he has a very poor opinion of himself. You can always tell when a man is a great way from God—he is always talking about himself, and how good he is. But the moment he sees God by the eye of faith he is down on his knees, and, like Job, he cries, "Behold, I am vile." All his goodness flees away. What men want is to be in earnest about their salvation, and they will soon find Christ. You do not need to go up to the heights to bring Him down, or down to the depths to bring Him up, or to go off to some distant city to find Him. This day He is near to every one of us. I heard some one in the inquiry-room telling a young person to go home and seek Christ in his closet. I would not dare to tell any one to do that. You might be dead before you got home. If I read my Bible correctly, the man who preaches the gospel is not the man who tells me to seek Christ to-morrow or an hour hence, but *now*. He is near to every one of us this minute to save. If the world would just come to God for salvation, and be in earnest about it, they would find the Son of God right at the door of their heart.

Suppose I should say I lost a very valuable diamond here last night—I have not, but suppose it—worth $100,000. I had it in my pocket when I came into the hall, and when I had done preaching I found it was not in my pocket, but was in the hall somewhere. And suppose I was to say that any one who found it could have it. How earnest you would all become! You would not get very much of my sermon; you would all be thinking of the diamond. I do not believe the police could get you out of this hall. The idea of finding a diamond worth $100,000! If you could only find it, it would lift you out of poverty at once, and you would be independent for the rest of your days. Oh, how soon everybody would become terribly in earnest then! I would to God I could get men to seek for Christ in the same way. I have got something worth more than a diamond to offer you. Is not salvation—eternal life—worth more than all the diamonds in the world? Suppose Gabriel should wing his way from the throne of God and come down here, and say he had been commissioned by Jehovah to come and offer to this assembly any one gift you might choose,

You could have just what you chose, but only one thing. What would it be? The wealth of this city, or of the world? Would that be your choice? Ten thousand times, no! Your one cry would be, "Life! eternal life!"

There is nothing that men value as they do life. Let a man be out on a wreck that is fast going down. He is worth a million dollars, and his only chance is to give up that million dollars, just to save the life of the body. He would give it up in a moment. "Skin for skin; all that a man hath will he give for his life." I understand some people have been afraid to come to this hall because there might be a cry of "Fire! fire!" and a panic, and they might lose their life. Yet there are twenty doors to the building; I do not know that I ever saw a building that you could get out of easier. Yet people seem to sleep, and to forget that there is no door out of hell. If they enter there they must remain, age after age. Millions on millions of years will roll on, but there will be no door, no escape out of hell. May God wake up this slumbering congregation and make you anxious about your souls. People talk about our being earnest and fanatical—about our being on fire. Would to God the Church was on fire; this world would soon shake to its foundation. May God wake up a slumbering Church! What we want men to do is not to shout "Amen," and clasp their hands. The deepest and quietest waters very often run swiftest. We want men to go right to work; there will be a chance for you to shout by-and-by. Go and speak to your neighbour, and tell him of Christ and heaven. You need not go a few yards down these streets before you find some one who is passing down to the darkness of eternal death. Let us haste to the rescue!

What we want to see is men really wishing to become Christians, men who are in dead earnest about it. The idea of hearing a man say in answer to the question, "Do you want to become a Christian?" "Well, I *would not mind*." My friend, I do not think *you* will ever get into the kingdom of God until you change your language. We want men crying from the depths of their heart, "I *want* to be saved." On the day of Pentecost the cry was, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" These men were in earnest, and they found Christ right there; three thousand found Him, when they sought with all their hearts. When men seek Christ as they

do wealth, they will soon find Him. To be sure, the world will raise a cry that they are excited. Let cotton go up ten or fifteen per cent. before to-morrow morning, and you will see how quickly the merchants will get excited! And the papers don't cry it down either. They say it is healthy excitement; commerce is getting on. But when you begin to get excited about your soul's salvation, and are in earnest, then they raise the cry, "Oh, they are getting excited; most unhealthy state of things." Yet they don't talk about men hastening down to death by thousands. There is the poor drunkard, look at him! Hear the piercing cry going up to heaven! Yet the Church of God slumbers and sleeps. Here and there there is an inquirer, and yet they go into the inquiry-room as if they were half asleep. When will men seek for Christ as they seek for wealth, or as they seek for honour?

I am told that when the war broke out on the Gold Coast, though it was known that the climate was a very unhealthy one, and a great many who went there would never return, yet hundreds and thousands of men wanted to go. Why? They wanted to get wealth, and from wealth honour. And if there is a chance of going to India, no end of men are willing to go. To get a little honour they will sacrifice comfort, pleasure, health, and everything. What we want, is to have men seeking the kingdom of God, as they seek for honour and wealth.

As I said, if life is in danger, how terribly in earnest men become. That is right; there is no doubt about *that*. But why should not men be as much in earnest about their soul's salvation? Why should not every man and woman here wake up and seek the Lord with all their heart? Then, the Lord says, you *shall* find Him.

There is a story told of a vessel that was wrecked, and was going down at sea. There were not enough lifeboats to take all on board. When the vessel went down, some of the lifeboats were near the vessel. A man swam from the wreck just as it was going down, to one of the boats; but they had no room to take him, and they refused. When they refused, he seized hold of the boat with his right hand, but they took a sword and cut off his fingers. When he had lost the fingers of his right hand, the man was so earnest to save his life that he seized the boat with his left hand;

they cut off the fingers of that hand too. Then the man swam up and seized the boat with his teeth, and they had compassion on him and relented. They could not cut off his head, so they took him in, and the man saved his life. Why? *Because he was in earnest.* Why not seek your soul's salvation as that man sought to save his life?

Will there ever be a better time? Will there ever be a better time for that old man whose locks are growing grey, whose eyes are growing dim, and who is hastening to the grave? Is not this the very best time for him? "Seek the Lord *while He may be found.*" There is a man in the middle of life. Is this not the best time for *him* to seek the kingdom of God! Will he ever have a better opportunity? Will Christ ever be more willing to save than now? He says, "Come, for *all* things are now ready." Not, *going to be*, but are *now* ready. There is a young man. My friend, is it not the best time for you to seek the kingdom of God? Seek the Lord, you can find Him here to-night. Can you say that you will find Him here to-morrow? Will any one rise up in this hall and say that? Young man, you know not what to-morrow may bring forth. Do you know that since we met here last night 43,000 souls have passed from time to eternity? Do you know that every time the clock ticks a soul passes away? Is not this the best time for you to seek the kingdom of God?

My boy, the Lord wants you. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and seek Him while He may be found. About thirty years ago, a great revival swept over this land. A great many men stood and shook their heads; they could not believe it was a healthy state of things. The Church was not in its normal state! The Church from Maine to Minnesota, and on to California, was astir. And as you passed over this great republic, over its western prairies and mountains, and through its valleys, as you went on by train, and as you passed through its cities and villages, you could see the churches lit up; and men were flocking into the kingdom of God by hundreds. And in a year and a half or two years there were more than half a million souls brought in. Men said it was false excitement, wildfire, and it would pass away. But, my friends, it was grace preceding judgment. Little did we know that

our nation was soon to be baptized in blood, and that we would soon hear the tramp of a million men, that hundreds and thousands of our young men, the flower of our nation, would soon be lying in a soldier's grave. But, oh, my friends, it was God calling his people in. He was preparing our nation for a terrible struggle.

And now, it seems to me that there is another wave of blessing passing over this earth. Tidings are coming from all parts of the world, telling us of the great work God is doing. The last tidings from India, told us of a blessed work going on there. The last tidings from Japan and from other places—we have the same good news of God pouring out his Spirit. It was only the other day that two men came up here from a town of 50,000 inhabitants, and wanted us to go there; but we could not, and we told them to go home and get to work themselves. To-day one of them told us that they had sixteen last night in the inquiry-room. God is pouring out his Spirit everywhere. Everywhere men are putting in the sickle and bringing their sheaves and laying them at the feet of the Master. I believe we are living in the days that our fathers prayed for. The heavens are opened, and the Spirit of God is descending upon the sons of men.

Now, this time of revival is a good time to seek the Lord. Will you ever have a better time? The tidings from every city is this—the people are praying. It is a question in my mind if there was ever so much prayer going up to God as at the present. Not only here, but all round the world, we have God's people making their hearts burdened for the salvation of souls. And is it not God working? Will there ever be a better time for you to seek the kingdom of God than the present, when there is such a great awakening, when there is such a spirit of expectation; when the Church of God is coming up as one man, and the spirit of unity prevails? Think of the praying ones here. Do you believe there were ever so many men and women praying for your soul as there are here to-night? Look over this audience—what are these Christians doing now! They are silently praying to God. I can see they are praying. There is a young man with his mother sitting by his side. That mother is pleading, "God save my boy to night!" May it go down deep into his soul! "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found."

Now, let me ask you a question. Do you believe that the Lord can be found here to-night? I appeal to these ministers present at my side; do you believe He can? They answer "YES." My friends, do *you* believe it? Another YES comes from the audience. Well, if He can, is it not the height of madness for any man or woman to go out of this hall without seeking Him? If He can be found, why not seek Him? Young lady, why not seek Him with all your heart? Young man, why not seek Christ to-night with all your heart? Why not say, "I *must* be saved"? There is nothing so important as this great question of salvation.

Supposing you could win the world, what would you do with it? Would it be worth as much as Christ? Let everything else be laid aside, and make up your minds that you will not rest until you have sought and found the Lord Jesus. I never knew any one make up his mind to seek Him but he soon found Him. At Dublin a young man found Christ. He went home and lived so godly and so Christ-like, that two of his brothers could not understand what had wrought the change in him. They left Dublin and followed us to Sheffield, and found Christ there. They were in earnest. But, thanks be to God, you have not got to go out of this hall. Christ can be found here to-night. I firmly believe every one here can find Christ to-night if you will seek for Him with all your heart. He says, "Call upon Me." Did you ever hear of any one calling on Christ with the whole heart, that Christ didn't answer? Look at that thief on the cross! It may have been that he had a praying mother, and that his mother taught him the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. He had heard Christ pray that wonderful prayer, "Father, forgive them.' And as he was hanging on the cross that text of Scripture came to his mind, "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call ye upon Him while He is near." The truth came flashing into his soul, and he says, "He is near me now; I will call on Him. Lord, remember me when Thou comest into thy kingdom." No sooner had he called than the Lord said, "This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise." That was his seeking opportunity, his day. My friends, this is your day now. I believe that every man has his day. You have it just now; why not call upon Him just now?

Say, as the poor thief did, "Lord, remember me." That was his golden opportunity, and the Lord heard and answered and saved him. Did not Bartimeus call on Him while He was near? Christ was passing by Jericho for the last time, and he cried out, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me." And did not the Lord hear his prayer, and give him his sight? It was a good thing Zaccheus called—or rather the Lord called him, but when the Lord called he came. May the Lord call many here, and may you respond, "Lord, here am I; you have called and I come." Do you believe the Lord will call a poor sinner, and then cast him out? No! his word stands for ever, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out."

I was glad when that man I told you of, said he felt as if he was too bad. Men are pretty near the kingdom of God when they do not see anything good in themselves. At the Fulton Street prayer-meeting a man came in, and this was his story. He said he had a mother who prayed for him; he was a wild, reckless prodigal. Some time after his mother's death he began to be troubled. He thought he ought to get into new company, and leave his old companions. So he said he would go and join a secret society; he thought he would join the Odd Fellows. They went and made inquiry about him, and they found he was a drunken sailor, so they black-balled him. They would not have him. He went to the Freemasons; he had nobody to recommend him, so they inquired and found there was no good in his character, and they too black-balled him. They didn't want him. One day, some one handed him a little notice in the street about the prayer-meeting, and he went in. He heard that Christ had come to save sinners. He believed Him; he took Him at his word; and, in reporting the matter, he said he "*came to Christ without a character, and Christ hadn't black-balled him.*"

My friends, that is Christ's way. Is there a man here without a character, with nobody to say a good word for him? I bring you good news. Call on the Son of God, and He will hear you. Call on Him to-night.

I was at a meeting for ministers the other day. Up in the gallery there was one solitary woman; she sat there alone. When the meeting was over and I was passing out, she came and said,

"Mr. Moody, do you remember me?" "Oh yes," I said, "I remember you." Where had I met her? Mr. Sankey and myself were leaving Dundee for the north of Scotland. There was a lady who had come from London and brought her two boys all the way to get blessed; they must have been about eighteen or nineteen—twins. That mother's heart was burdened for their salvation. The last night we had a meeting there, one of the sons yielded himself up to Christ, and the mother went back next morning with her two boys, rejoicing that they had asked and found peace in believing. Some people may say that she was a great fanatic for going all the way from London to Dundee with her boys to get a blessing. But last Friday she says, "My boy, who found the Lord in Dundee, died three weeks ago." And as she pressed my hand as I left the meeting, I said to myself, "Was it not a good thing that mother took her boy to Dundee?" My friends, let us be in earnest about the salvation of our children, and of our friends. Warn that young lady. Yes, mother, speak to that daughter of yours. Father, speak to that child of yours. Wife, speak to your unconverted husband; husband, speak to your unconverted wife. Do not let a man go out of this house saying, "Nobody cared for my soul." I never saw a mother burdened for her children but they soon became anxious. Oh may there be many a sinner seeking the kingdom of God with all their heart!

Before I close, I want to ask you once more, "What are you going to do? If the Lord is near, won't you call upon Him? Don't let that scoffing man next you keep you out of the kingdom of God. There is a scornful look upon that man's face; perhaps he is making light of what I am saying. Don't mind him; don't look to him; but just look right up to God, and ask Him to save you. Now, every true friend—and you all have friends—every true friend, if you could get his advice to-night, would tell you to be saved now. Ask that minister sitting next you, "Had I better seek the kingdom of God to-night?" What does he tell you? "By all means, don't put it off another minute." Ask that godly praying mother by your side, "Is it best to seek the kingdom of God to-night?" Does she say, Put it off one week, or put it off one month? Do you think that mother would say that? There is not a Christian mother in this hall who would say it. I doubt if there

is an unconverted mother even here whose advice would be to put off becoming a Christian. Ask that praying sister of yours, ask that praying brother, ask any friend you have here—if you are sitting near one—whether it is not the very best thing you can do. And then cry up to heaven and ask Him who is sitting at the right hand of God, and who loves you more than your father or your mother, or any one on earth—who loves you so much that He gave Himself for you; ask *Him* what he will have you do, and hear his voice from the throne, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." And then shout down to the infernal regions, and ask those down there, and what will they say? "Send some one to my father's house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place." Heaven, earth, and hell unite in this one thing, "Seek first the kingdom of God." Don't put it off. Call upon Him while He is near. And if you call upon Him in real earnest He will hear that call.

You may call too late. I have no doubt that those who would not pray when the ark was building prayed when the flood came, but their prayer was not answered. I have no doubt that when Lot went out of Sodom, Sodom cried to God, but it was too late, and God's judgment swept them from the earth. My friends, it is not too late now, but it may be at twelve o'clock to-night. I cannot find any place in this Bible where I can say you may call to-morrow. I am not justified in saying that. "Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation." Those men of Jerusalem, what a golden opportunity they had, with Christ in their midst. We see the Son of God weeping over Jerusalem, his heart bursting with grief for the city, as He cried, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that stonest the prophets, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her brood, but ye would not." He could look down forty years, and see Titus coming with his army, and besieging that city. They called upon God then, but it was too late, and eleven hundred thousand people perished. To-night is a time of mercy. It may be I am talking to some one to-night whose days of grace may be few, to some one who may be snatched away very soon. There may be some one here to-night who may never hear another gospel sermon; some one who may be hearing *the last call.* My friend, be wise to

night. Make up your mind that you will seek the kingdom of God now. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Christ is inviting you to come—"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Oh, may we all find rest in Christ to-night! Do not let anything divert your minds, but this night, this hour, make up your mind that you will not leave this hall until the great question of eternity has been settled.

VI.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?

MATT. XXII. 42.

I SUPPOSE there is no one here who has not thought, more or less, about Christ. You have heard about Him, and read about Him, and heard men preach about Him. For eighteen hundred years men have been talking about Him, and thinking about Him; and some have their minds made up about who He is, and doubtless some have not. And although all these years have rolled away, this question comes up, addressed to each of us, to-day, "What think ye of Christ?"

I do not know why it should not be thougnt a proper question for one man to put to another. If I were to ask you what you think of any of your prominent men, you would already have your mind made up about him. If I were to ask you what you think of your noble Queen, you would speak right out and tell me your opinion in a minute. If I were to ask about your prime minister, you would tell me freely what you had for or against him. And why should not people make up their minds about the Lord Jesus Christ, and take their stand for or against Him? If you think well of Him, why not speak well of Him, and range yourselves on his side? And if you think ill of Him, and believe Him to be an impostor, and that He did not die to save the world, why not lift up your voice, and say you are against Him? It would be a happy day for Christianity if men would just take sides—if we could know positively who was really for Him, and who was against Him.

It is of very little importance what the world thinks of any one else. The Queen and the statesman, the peers and the princes,

must soon be gone. Yes; it matters little, comparatively, what we think of them. Their lives can only interest a few; but every living soul on the face of the earth is concerned with this Man. The question for the world is, "What think ye of Christ?" I do not ask you what you think of the Episcopal Church, or of the Presbyterians, or the Baptists, or the Roman Catholics; I do not ask you what you think of this minister or that, of this doctrine or that; but I want to ask you what you think of the living person of Christ?

I should like to ask, Was He really the Son of God—the great God-man? Did He leave heaven and come down to this world for a purpose? Was it really to seek and to save? I should like to begin with the manger, and follow Him up through the thirty-three years He was here upon earth. I should ask you what you think of his coming into this world, and being born in a manger when it might have been a palace; why He left the grandeur and the glory of heaven, and the royal retinue of angels; why He passed by palaces and crowns and dominion, and came down here alone?

I should like to ask what you think of Him as a *teacher*. He spake as never man spake. I should like to take Him up as a preacher. I should like to bring you to that mountain side, that we might listen to the words as they fall from his gentle lips. Talk about the preachers of the present day! I would rather a thousand times be five minutes at the feet of Christ, than listen a lifetime to all the wise men in the world. He used just to hang truth upon anything. Yonder is a sower, a fox, a bird, and He just gathers the truth round them, so that you cannot see a fox, a sower, or a bird, without thinking what Jesus said. Yonder is a lily of the valley, you cannot see it without thinking of his words, "They toil not, neither do they spin." He makes the little sparrow chirping in the air preach to us. How fresh those wonderful sermons are, how they live to-day! How we love to tell them to our children, how the children love to hear! "Tell me a story about Jesus," how often we hear it; how the little ones love his sermons! No story-book in the world will ever interest them like the stories that He told. And yet how profound He was; how He puzzled the wise men; how the scribes and the

Pharisees could never fathom Him! Oh, do you not think He was a wonderful preacher?

I should like to ask you what you think of Him as a *physician.* A man would soon have a reputation as a doctor if he could cure as Christ did. No case was ever brought to Him but what He was a match for. He had but to speak the word, and disease fled before Him. Here comes a man covered with leprosy. "Lord, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean," he cries. "I will," says the Great Physician, and in an instant the leprosy is gone. The world has hospitals for incurable diseases; but there were no incurable diseases with Him.

Now see Him in the little home at Bethany, binding up the wounded hearts of Martha and Mary, and tell me what you think of Him as a *comforter.* He is a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless. The weary may find a resting-place upon that breast, and the friendless may reckon Him their friend. He never varies, He never fails, He never dies. His sympathy is ever fresh, His love is ever free. O widow and orphans, O sorrowing and mourning, will you not thank God for Christ the comforter?

But these are not the points I wish to take up. Let us go to those who knew Christ, and ask what they thought of Him. If you want to find out what a man is now-a-days, you inquire about him from those who know him best. I do not wish to be partial; we will go to his enemies, and to his friends. We will ask them, What think ye of Christ? We will ask his friends and his enemies. If we only went to those who liked Him, you would say, "Oh, he is so blind; he thinks so much of the man that he can't see his faults. You can't get anything out of him, unless it be in his favour; it is a one-sided affair altogether." So we shall go in the first place to his enemies, to those who hated Him, persecuted Him, cursed and slew Him. I shall put you in the jury-box, and call upon them to tell us what they think of Him.

First, among the witnesses, let us call upon the Pharisees. We know how they hated him. Let us put a few questions to them. Come, Pharisees, tell us what you have against the Son of God. What do *you* think of Christ? Hear what they say! *This*

man receiveth sinners. What an argument to bring against Him! Why, it is the very thing that makes us love Him. It is the glory of the gospel. He receives sinners. If He had not, what would have become of *us?* Have you nothing more to bring against Him than *this?* Why, it is one of the greatest compliments that was ever paid Him. Once more; when He was hanging on the tree, you had this to say of Him, "He saved others, Himself He cannot save." And so He did save others, but He could not save Himself and save us too. So He laid down his own life for yours and mine. Yes, Pharisees, you have told the truth for once in your lives! *He saved others.* He died for others. He was a ransom for many; so it is quite true what you think of Him—*He saved others, Himself He cannot save.*

Now, let us call upon Caiaphas. Let him stand up here in his flowing robes; let us ask him for his evidence. "Caiaphas, you were chief priest when Christ was tried; you were president of the Sanhedrim; you were in the council-chamber when they found Him guilty; you yourself condemned Him. Tell us; what did the witnesses say? On what grounds did you judge Him? What testimony was brought against Him?

"He hath spoken blasphemy," says Caiaphas. "He said, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.' When I heard that, I found Him guilty of blasphemy; I rent my mantle, and condemned Him to death." Yes, all that they had against Him was that He was the Son of God; and they slew Him for the promise of his coming for his bride.

Now, let us summon Pilate. Let him enter the witness-box. Pilate, this man was brought before you; you examined Him; you talked with Him face to face, *what think ye of Christ?* "I find no fault in Him," says Pilate. "He said He was the King of the Jews" (just as he wrote it over the cross); "but I find no fault in Him." Such is the testimony of the man who examined Him! And, as he stands there, the centre of a Jewish mob, there comes along a man, elbowing his way, in haste. He rushes up to Pilate and, thrusting out his hand, gives him a message. He tears it open; his face turns pale as he reads—"Have thou nothing to do with *this just man,* for I have suffered many things this day in a

dream because of Him." It is from Pilate's wife—her testimony to Christ. You want to know what his enemies thought of Him? You want to know what a heathen thought? Well, here it is, "no fault in Him;" and the wife of a heathen, "this just man!"

And now, look—in comes Judas. He ought to make a good witness. Let us address him. "Come, tell us, Judas, what think ye of Christ. You knew the Master well; you sold Him for thirty pieces of silver; you betrayed Him with a kiss; you saw Him perform those miracles; you were with Him in Jerusalem. In Bethany, when He summoned up Lazarus, you were there. What think ye of Him?" I can see him as he comes into the presence of the chief priests; I can hear the money ring as he dashes it upon the table—"*I have betrayed innocent blood!*" Here is the man who betrayed Him, and this is what he thinks of Him! Yes, my friends, God has made every man who had anything to do with the death of his Son put their testimony on record that He was an innocent Man.

Let us take the Centurion, who was present at the execution. He had charge of the Roman soldiers. He had told them to make Him carry his cross; he had given orders for the nails to be driven into his feet and hands, for the spear to be thrust in his side. Let the Centurion come forward. "Centurion, you had charge of the executioners; you saw that the order for his death was carried out; you saw Him die; you heard Him speak upon the cross. Tell us, *what think you of Christ?*" Hark! Look at him; he is smiting his breast as he cries, "*Truly, this was the Son of God!*"

I might go to the thief upon the cross, and ask what he thought of Him. At first he railed upon Him and reviled Him. But then he thought better of it. "This man hath done nothing amiss," he says. I might go further. I might summon the very devils themselves and ask them for their testimony. Have *they* anything to say of Him? Why, the very devils called Him the Son of God! In Mark we have the unclean spirit crying, "Jesus, Thou Son of the most High God." Men say, "Oh, I believe Christ to be the Son of God, and because I believe it intellectually, I shall be saved." I tell you the devils did that. And they did more than that, *they trembled.*

Let us bring in his friends. We want you to hear their evidence. Let us call that prince of preachers. Let us hear the forerunner, the wilderness preacher, John. Save the Master Himself, none ever preached like this man—this man who drew all Jerusalem and all Judea into the wilderness to hear him; this man who burst upon the nations like the flash of a meteor. Let John the Baptist come with his leathern girdle and his hairy coat, and let him tell us what he thinks of Christ. His words, though they were echoed in the wilderness of Palestine, are written in the Book for ever, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." This is what John the Baptist thought of Him. "I bare record that He is the Son of God." No wonder he drew all Jerusalem and Judea to him, because he preached Christ. And whenever men preach Christ, they are sure to have plenty of followers.

Let us bring in Peter, who was with Him on the mount of transfiguration, who was with Him the night He was betrayed. "Come, Peter, tell us what you think of Christ. Stand in this witness-box and testify of Him. You denied Him once. You said, with a curse, you did not know Him. Was it true, Peter? Don't you know Him?" "Know Him!" I can imagine Peter saying; "It was a lie I told them. I *did* know Him." Afterwards I can hear him charging home their guilt upon these Jerusalem sinners. He calls Him "both Lord and Christ." Such was the testimony on the day of Pentecost. "God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." And tradition tells us that when they came to execute Peter, he felt he was not worthy to die in the way his Master died, and he requested to be crucified with his head downwards. So much did Peter think of Him!

Now let us hear from the beloved disciple John. He knew more about Christ than any other man. He had laid his head on his Saviour's bosom. He had heard the throbbing of that loving heart. Look into his gospel if you wish to know what he thought of Him.

Matthew writes of Him as the Royal King come from his throne. Mark writes of Him as the servant, and Luke as the Son of Man. John takes up his pen, and, with one stroke, for ever settles

the question of Unitarianism. He goes right back before the time of Adam. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Look into Revelation. He calls Him "the bright and the Morning Star." So John thought well of Him--because he knew him well.

We might bring in Thomas, the doubting disciple. "You doubted Him, Thomas? You would not believe He had risen, and you put your fingers into the wound in his side. What do you think of Him?" "*My Lord and my God!*" says Thomas.

Then go over to Decapolis and you will find Christ has been there casting out devils. Let us call the men of that country and ask what they think of Him. "*He hath done all things well*" they say.

But we have other witnesses to bring in. Take the persecuting Saul, once one of the worst of his enemies. Breathing out threatenings, he meets Him. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" says Christ; and He might have added, "What have I done to you? Have I injured you in any way? Did I not come to bless you? Why do you treat Me thus, Saul?" And then Saul asks, "Who art Thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." You see, He was not ashamed of his name; although He had been in heaven, "I am *Jesus of Nazareth.*" What a change did that one interview make to Paul! A few years after we hear him say, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dross that I may win Christ." Such a testimony to the Saviour!

But I shall go still further. I shall go away from earth into the other world. I shall summon the angels and ask what they think of Christ. They saw Him in the bosom of the Father before the world was. Before the dawn of creation; before the morning stars sang together, He was there. They saw Him leave the throne and come down to the manger. What a scene for them to witness! Ask these heavenly beings what they thought of Him then. For once they are permitted to speak; for once the silence of heaven is broken. Listen to their song on the plains of Bethlehem, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." He leaves

the throne to save the world. Is it a wonder the angels thought well of Him?

Then there are the redeemed saints—they that see Him face to face. Here on earth He was never known, no one seemed really to be acquainted with Him; but He was known in that world where He had been from the foundation. What do they think of Him there? If we could hear from heaven, we should hear a shout which would glorify and magnify his name. We are told that when John was in the Spirit on the Lord's-day, and being caught up, he heard a shout around him, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands and thousands of voices, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!" Yes, He is worthy of all this. Heaven cannot speak too well of Him. Oh, that earth would take up the echo, and join with heaven in singing, "WORTHY to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing!'

But there is yet another witness, a higher still. Some think that the God of the Old Testament is the Christ of the New. But when Jesus came out of Jordan, baptized by John, there came a voice from heaven. God the Father spoke. It was his testimony to Christ: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Ah, yes! God the Father thinks well of the Son. And if God is well pleased with Him, so ought we. If the sinner and God are well pleased with Christ, then the sinner and God can meet. The moment you say as the Father said, "I am well pleased with Him," and accept Him, you are wedded to God. Will you not believe the testimony? Will you not believe this witness, this last of all, the Lord of hosts, the King of kings Himself? Once more He repeats it, so that all may know it. With Peter and James and John, on the mount of transfiguration, He cries again, "This is my beloved Son; hear Him." And that voice went echoing and re-echoing through Palestine, through all the earth from sea to sea; yes, that voice is echoing still, *Hear Him! Hear Him!*

My friend, will you hear Him to-day? Hark! what is He saying to you? "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and

learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." Will you not think well of such a Saviour? Will you not believe in Him? Will you not trust in Him with all your heart and mind? Will you not live for Him? If He laid down his life for us, is it not the least we can do to lay down ours for Him? If He bore the Cross and died on it for me, ought I not to be willing to take it up for Him? Oh, have we not reason to think well of Him. Do you think it is right and noble to lift up your voice against such a Saviour? Do you think it is just to cry, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!" Oh, may God help all of us to glorify the Father, by thinking well of his only-begotten Son

VII.

EXCUSES.

Part I.

"And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."—Luke xiv. 18—20.

No sooner does any one begin to preach the Gospel than men and women begin "to make excuse." It is the old story. There is not an unsaved person here but has got some excuse. If I were to go to each of you and ask why you do not accept God's invitation to the Gospel feast, you would have an excuse ready on the end of your tongue; and if you had not one ready, the devil would be there to help you to make one. And if they could be answered he is ready to make new ones. He has had six thousand years' experience, and he is very good at it; he can give you as many as you want.

Do you know the origin of excuses? You will find it away back in Eden. When Adam had sinned, he tried to excuse himself. "The woman *whom Thou gavest* to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." He tried to lay the blame on God, Eve tried to lay it on the serpent; and down to the present time, men and women, with one consent, begin to make excuse.

Remember that these men Luke tells us about were not invited to a funeral, or to hear some dry, stupid lecture or sermon; they were not invited to visit an hospital, or a prison, or a madhouse; to witness some terrible scene or execution—something that would have pained them. It was to go to a feast. The Gospel is

represented in the Bible as a feast. In the evening of this dispensation there is going to be the marriage supper of God's Son. Blessed is he that shall be at the marriage supper of the Lamb. If I know my own heart, I would rather be torn limb from limb, or have my heart taken from my body this moment, and be present on that glorious day, than have the wealth of the world rolled at my feet, and miss that wonderful banquet at the marriage of the Lamb.

Not only was this a feast, but it was *a royal feast.* If you had the honour of an invitation from Windsor Castle—if Her Majesty the Queen invited you to some great banquet got up in honour of her son, there is not a man or woman here but would accept the invitation. You would all want it to be put into the papers, to show how you had been honoured. But here is something worth more than that. Here is an invitation from the King of kings, the Lord of lords, God's only Son. By and by He will take his bride into the bridal chamber. The marriage supper of the Lamb is hastening on. He has gone to prepare new mansions for his bride; the old mansions are not good enough; and He will come by and by to take her to Himself. It is an invitation to this feast that I bring you. The invitations are going out now to every corner of the earth. There is not one here who is not invited. For eighteen hundred years God's messengers have been crossing over valley and mountain, over desert and sea, from end to end of the earth, inviting men and women to the Gospel feast. What an honour for worms of the dust! When man prepares a feast, there is a great rush to see who will get the best place. But God prepares his feast, and the chairs would all be empty if his disciples did not go out and compel them to come in.

Then, when man prepares a feast, he invites his *friends,* those who love him; but God invites his *bitterest enemies,* those who are in rebellion against Him. And yet men make excuse! No sooner is the invitation given by God than the excuses begin to rain in.

Did you ever stop to think what would take place if God should take, at his word, every one who makes excuse?—if He were to say, "Yes, if you want to be excused from this feast, I will excuse you," and with the next stroke should sweep them all from the face of the earth? Supposing every one in this land should be

taken at their word, and laid in the arms of death, how many of your shops would be closed to-morrow; how many homes would be filled with mourning and tears? Not a saloon-keeper would be left to carry on his traffic; every rum-seller wants to be excused. He knows that if he accepts of this invitation, he would have to give up his hellish trade. He could not go on making all those fatherless children, and taking the bread out of the mouth of the orphan and the widow, and be going on his way to the marriage supper of the Lamb at the same time. Every publican and every drunkard wants to be excused. If God *did* excuse them and take them away with a stroke, you would have no drunkards reeling through your streets. There would be no harlots then, for every harlot wants to be excused; she knows she has to give up her sins if she wants to be present at the supper of the Lamb. And your princely merchants, many of them, would be gone. They do not want to accept the invitation, because they think if they do they cannot make money so fast. They are carrying on some business which would then have to be stopped, and, with one consent, they begin to make excuse. But oh, my friends, it would be a solemn time if God should take men at their word. The grass would soon be growing in the streets, and the living would be occupied in burying the dead.

Now, *be honest with God* to-day. God is honest; He means what He says. This is an honest invitation, and He wants us to be honest. If you do not want to be at this supper, why not say so? Why make excuses? They are nothing but lies. Is there any one of you can rise up and give a *reasonable* excuse—if so, tell us what it is—why you don't accept this invitation? *Think* for a minute. What valid reason can you give? You have none. It is not often we get an invitation to attend a royal feast, but here comes one to be present at the marriage supper of God's only Son. Is it not *downright folly* for any one to refuse? Just think what you are asking to be excused from. From heaven; from the society of the pure; from those who have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb. Man asks to be excused from the mansions which Christ has prepared; from the society of the angels; from God the Father, and Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost. All the really great men of the world are not down here, they are in heaven. You talk of the great men in England, but I

tell you the best this earth has ever had are there, and the best that ever lived will be gathered at that feast. For six thousand years they have been gathering there—all the pure of the earth—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yes, we shall sit down with the patriarchs and prophets, and apostles and martyrs, and with the best that have lived upon this earth. I would rather die to-night and be sure of meeting the bliss of the purified in yon world of light, than live for centuries with the wealth of this world at my feet, and miss the marriage supper of the Lamb. I have missed many appointments in my life, but, by the grace of God, I mean to make sure of that one. Why, the blessed privilege of sitting down at the marriage supper of the Lamb, to see the King in his beauty, to be for ever with the Lord, who would miss it?

Let us take up these three men who, "with one consent, began to make excuse."

What did the first one say? "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it." Some one has said, Why did he not look at the ground before he bought it? If he had been a good business man, he would have seen his ground *first*, he couldn't make the bargain any better by going to look at it now. And now that he has got it, he can go and look at it at any time; the land could not run away! It was not that he had made a partial bargain and might withdraw, or that some one might step in ahead of him and get the ground from him. He did not even have that excuse. He had bought the land; there was no fear that he should lose his title to it. Yet he must needs go and see it. Strange time to go and see ground just at supper-time! On the face of it it was a downright lie. He did not want to go to the feast, and so he manufactured this excuse to ease his conscience. That is what people make excuses for. The devil gets men into that cradle and rocks them to sleep in it.

What did the second man say? "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them. I pray thee have me excused." Why not prove them before he bought them? It was no time to prove oxen after they were bought. And now that the bargain was closed he could prove them any time. Why not let them stand in the stall till he had accepted this invitation? Don't you see that was another lie?

The third man's excuse was the most ridiculous of them all. "I have married a wife and therefore I cannot come." Why did he not take his wife along with him? Who likes to go to a feast better than a young bride? He might have asked her to go too; and if she were not willing, then let her stay at home. The fact was, *he did not want to go.*

Eighteen hundred years have rolled away, and they tell us the world has grown wiser; they say it has improved wonderfully during these years; but tell me, have men got any better excuses? Young lady! can you give a better excuse? Have you got an excuse that will stand the light of eternity, have you got an excuse that will even satisfy yourself? Men try every kind of excuse, but the man does not live who can give a good one. Let some terrible disease lay hold of a man, let death come and look him in the face, and his excuses are gone in a moment. My friends, your excuses will look altogether different when you come to stand before the great tribunal of your Judge.

I would just like to take up some of the popular excuses of the present day. There is one very common one, "I do not like this minister or that preacher." Well, what has that to do with it? What have you to do with *the messenger?* Suppose a boy comes and gives me a despatch, some good news from my wife. I don't turn round to see who brings it. He may be black or white, that is nothing to me. It is the message I care for. Is it not the fact that God invites you to a feast? What are you looking at the messenger for? I have heard this excuse till I am tired, "I don't like this minister or that minister, this person or that one who calls himself a Christian." Never mind about the *messenger.* The question is, are you willing to receive the *message* from God? Do you believe the Word of God is true, and that God invites you to this feast? Do you believe that the invitation is to "every creature" in the world? You have nothing to do with the preacher who brings the message. If the message is from God, I ask you, why not accept it? If you are going to wait until you find some perfect man or woman to bring you the invitation, you will never accept it. There was never but one perfect Man. You will find a good many flaws in our character, a good many things you may not like in the followers of Christ, but I challenge you to find

a flaw in the character of our Master. *He* bids you come. And any one who accepts the invitation He will receive.

Another excuse. Only the other night, a lady came to me in the inquiry-room and said, "There are so many things in the Bible I cannot understand." No doubt about that. God says, the carnal man cannot understand spiritual things, and the Bible is a spiritual book. How *can* the unregenerate heart understand the Bible? Well, you say, if it is a sealed book, how am I going to be saved? Well, when God put salvation before the world, He put *that* very plain. The Word of God may be darkened to the natural man, but the way of salvation is written so plain, that the little child of six years old can understand it if she will. Take this passage and see if you do not understand it:—"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come; and let him that is athirst come." Are not many of you thirsty? God says come. "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Then you know what it is to take a gift? God puts salvation before you as a gift. "He came unto his own, and his own received Him not; but as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." You can understand that? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." You know what it is *to believe?* At any rate, you know what it is to *trust,* to commit your soul to the Lord Jesus Christ—that is all. There are dark and mysterious things in the Bible now, but when you begin to trust Christ your eyes will be opened, and the Bible will be a new book to you. Many things that are dark and mysterious to-day, to-morrow will have a new beauty. It will become the Book of books to you. To-day Christ may be a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness; but He will become to you the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely, the bright, and the morning star, if you take Him as your Saviour. Then you will understand the Bible.

No book in the world has been so misjudged as the Bible. Men judge it without reading it. Or perhaps they read a bit here and a bit there, and then close it saying, "It is so dark and mysterious!" You take a book, now-a-days, and read it. Some one asks you what you think about it. "Well," you say, "I have only read it through once, not very carefully, and I should not

like to give an opinion." Yet people take up God's book, read a few pages, and condemn the whole of it. Of all the sceptics and infidels I have ever met speaking against the Bible, I have never met one who read it through. There may be such men, but I have never met them. It is simply an excuse. There is no man living who will stand up before God and say that kept him out of the kingdom. It is the devil's work trying to make us believe it is not true, and that it is dark and mysterious. The only way to overcome the great enemy of souls is by the written Word of God. He knows that, and so tries to make men disbelieve it. As soon as a man is a true believer in the Word of God, he is a conqueror over Satan. Young man! the Bible is true. What have these infidels to give you in its place? What has made England but the open Bible? Every nation that exalteth the Word of God is exalted, and every nation that casteth it down is cast down. Oh, let us cling close to the Bible. Of course, we shall not understand it all at once. But men are not to condemn it on that account. Suppose I should send my little boy, five years old, to school to-morrow morning, and when he came home in the afternoon I say to him, "Willie, can you read? can you write? can you spell? Do you understand all about algebra, geometry, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek?" "Why, papa," the little fellow would say, "how funny you talk; I have been all day trying to learn the A B C!" Well, suppose I should reply, "If you have not finished your education, you need not go any more." What would you say? Why, you would say, I had gone mad. There would be just about as much reason in that, as in the way that people talk about the Bible. My friends, the men who have studied the Bible for fifty years—the wise men and the scholars, the great theologians—have never got down to the depths of it yet. There are truths there that the Church of God has been searching out for the last eighteen hundred years but no man has fathomed the depths of that ever-living stream.

There is another class here, who say, "That's not my difficulty. I believe the Word of God. But if I could speak alone to you, I would tell you my excuse. The fact is, I love the world very much, and if I become a Christian, I shall have to give up all pleasure and go through the world with a long face and never smile again. My joy will be for ever gone!" Well,

I want to say here, that no greater lie was ever forged than that. The devil started it away back in Eden; but there is not one word of truth in it; it is a libel upon Christianity. It does *not* make a man gloomy to become a child of God. See! there is a man going to execution. In a few moments he will be launched into eternity. But, flashing over the wires, comes a message from the Queen. She sends a reprieve. I run in haste to the man. I shout, "Good news! good news! You are *not* to die!" Does that make him gloomy? No! no! no! Young men, young women, old and young, don't believe Satan's lies any longer. It is the *want* of Christ that makes men gloomy. Take a man who is really thirsty, dying for want of water, and you go and give him water. Is that going to make him gloomy? That is what Christ is—water to the thirsty soul. If a man is dying for want of bread, and you give him bread, is that to make him gloomy? That is what Christ is to the soul—the bread of life. You will never have true pleasure or peace or joy or comfort until you have found Christ.

The idea that a man cannot have peace and joy in this world, if he is a Christian, is all folly. That used to be my difficulty. But I want to tell you I had more joy and solid comfort and peace the first year after I was converted, than I had all my previous life put together, and I never heard of any young convert who would not testify the same thing.

Another excuse—how thick they are! The air is full of them. I hear some one say, "Well, I should like to be a Christian, but *it is a very hard thing.* I have tried it a good many times. I would not like to speak right out, but that is just the honest truth." I will tell you what you have been doing, you have been trying to serve God with the old carnal mind. You might as well try to walk to the moon! It is utterly impossible. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin; the leopard cannot change its spots. It is impossible to serve God with the old carnal heart; but with the new heart God will give you the power, and you will not then be talking about its being hard to serve Him. That is just another lie. Let us look at it. Do you mean to say that God is a hard Master? Do you say it is a hard thing to serve God, and do you say that Satan is an easy master, and that it is easier to serve him

than God? Is it honest—is it true? God a hard master! If I read my Bible right, I read *that the way of the transgressor is hard.* Let me tell you it is the devil who is the hard master. Yes. "The way of the transgressor is hard." The Word of God cannot be changed. If you doubt it, young man, look at the convict in the prison, right in the bloom of manhood, right in the prime of life. He has been there for ten years, and must remain for ten years more—twenty years taken out of his life, and when he comes out of that miserable cell, he comes out a branded felon! Do you think *that* man will tell you "The way of the transgressor has been easy?" Go ask the poor drunkard, the man who is bound hand and foot, the slave of the infernal cup, who is hastening onwards to a drunkard's hell. Ask him if he has found the way of the transgressor easy. "*Easy?*" he will cry—"*Easy?*" *The way of the transgressor is hard, and gets harder and harder every day!*" Go, ask the libertine and the worldling; go ask the gambler and the blasphemer—with one voice they will tell you, that the service has been hard. Take the most faithful follower of the devil and put him upon this platform to-night, and let us put questions to him. The best way to settle this question is to find out by the testimony of those that have served both masters. I do not think a man has any right to judge until he has served both. If I heard a man condemn a master, I should be very apt to ask if he had served him; and if he had not, he could not very well testify. Now, if you have served two masters then you are very good judges. I want to stand here to-night as a witness for Christ. I have been in this school for twenty years, and I want to testify to-night that I have found him an easy master. I used to say, as you do, "It is a hard thing to be a Christian," and I thought it was; but now I tell you that the yoke is easy and the burden light. And I am speaking to many more to-night who have served both masters. Many of you have served Christ; and many of you before you were brought into his fold, served the devil. I would like to ask you, you that are Christ's, you who have served Him—some five, some ten, some twenty years—is Jesus a hard master? ("No! No!") I thought you would say *No.* I knew you would. I never heard a man say, "I have served Christ for five years, or for ten, and found him a hard master." And

now let me put you into the witness-box again. For many years you served Satan, some of you are serving him still, "Do you not find him a hard master." ("Yes! Yes!") Oh yes! my friends, you cannot help admitting it, you *know* it is true, *the way of the transgressor is hard.*

Suppose we could go beyond this life; suppose we could go down to the bottomless pit and summon up Judas, who has been there for the last eighteen hundred years. Suppose we put the question to him, "Judas, you betrayed the Son of God, sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. You have served the devil faithfully; have you found his service an easy one?" What a wail would rise from these lips! Do you think Judas found it easy? Do you think he found Satan a kind master? See him throwing down the thirty pieces of silver! Why, he got so tired of the devil's service that he hanged himself twenty-four hours after publicly entering it.

Now let us call upon Paul who, you may say, took the place that Judas once filled; let him come down from the hill-tops of glory. Do you think he would say it was a hard thing to serve God, and an easy thing to serve the devil? "I served the devil well," he says, "I breathed out threatenings, I persecuted the Church. But *it was hard for me to kick against the pricks.*"

And now let us see what God says about it. I would like to ask those who think Him a hard master, what they would do with a passage like this, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls. *For my yoke is easy* and my burden is light?" Yes, it is an easy thing to serve any one we love. If you love a person how you delight to please them.

Oh, my friends, do not dishonour God by calling Him a hard master. Speak to the young disciple of the Lord Jesus. Look at his very face. See how his eye is lit up with a light from heaven; how the glow from Calvary is shed around his path. Let him tell of the peace and the joy he has found in the service of Christ. Let him tell, till language fails him, how the way grows lighter and lighter as he journeys on, how his hopes grow brighter and brighter as he nears his eternal home. Oh yes, there is a vast

difference in the yoke of Satan and the yoke of Christ. The yoke of the Christian is easy and light; the yoke of the devil is heavy and hard. I beg of you do not listen to Satan's lies. He has deceived the whole human race. Oh, will you not just change masters to-night, and accept of the invitation to be present at the marriage supper of the Lamb?

EXCUSES.

Part II.

The next excuse I want to take up is "election." I meet a great many in the inquiry-room who tell me they are very anxious to be saved, but they do not know if they are elected. "If I were only sure that I were elected," they say, "I would soon be in earnest about salvation. But then I don't know that I'm one of the elect, so I have a very good excuse." Now I want to give no uncertain sound upon this point. I want to say that an unconverted person has nothing whatever to do with the doctrine of election. After you have become children of God, then we can talk about election —then we can talk about how sweet and beautiful the doctrine is. But those who are not God's children have nothing at all to do with it. You do not like any one to read your private letters, do you? Well, the doctrine of election was written, in a private letter, to the children of God. No wonder the world puzzles over it. No wonder they cannot understand it. It was never meant for them. What they have to do with is the "Whosoever" and the "Him that cometh," of the free invitations of Christ.

Suppose I am taking a walk near this hall to-night, and say to the policeman at the door, "Who is invited to this meeting?" "Those who have tickets," he replies. I have no ticket, so it is not for me. I walk on further, and come to another meeting. "This is only for those belonging to the ——— Society," I am told, so I know it is not for me. I go on further, and come to a large public building—a club. "Only members admitted," I read at the door. It is not for me either. I go

further still and come to another building, and over the door this is written: "Whosoever will, let him come in." Ah! it is for me this time. Whosoever—that means me—and in I go. My friends, God puts it just like that. All are invited to come to Christ. What have you to do with Paul's epistle about election? Why, you have nothing to do with it—not till you become a Christian. You have no business with the private letters of other people, and the "whosoever" comes before election. If you learn to read, you commence with the alphabet, don't you? You don't learn to read all at once. And if you come to Christ you must come in God's way; and then you can talk about how you came.

Yes, but, you say, there is another side to that. Christ said, "No man can come to Me except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw him." Well, I say Christ *is* drawing men. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." He is drawing men, but they will not come. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and drawing men unto Him. That drawing is going on now, but many a heart is fighting against the strivings of the Spirit. God is drawing men heavenward, and the devil is drawing them hellward.

Supposing a man, wishing to go to London, should say, "I don't know if God has decreed it. If I am to be there, I will be there. Anyhow, it is no use my taking the train. What is the use of my paying the fare and taking trouble about it? If I am elected to get there, I will get there somehow." Who would use such language as that? Or suppose a farmer were to say, "I am not going to plant; if God has decreed that I am to have a crop, I shall have it. I am not going to trouble myself tilling the ground or working hard; if God has decreed that I will have a good harvest, why, I shall have it without any tilling." Or suppose you are sick, and do not send for the doctor. Suppose you say, "If God has decreed it, I shall get well," so you refuse to take the medicines. You say, "There is no use in it; if God has decreed that I am to get well, I will get well without it." Whoever talks in that way? Yet a good many people carry out that very doctrine with regard to spiritual things.

I have an idea that the Lord Jesus saw how men were going

to stumble over this doctrine, so after He had been thirty or forty years in heaven, He came down and spoke to John. One Lord's day in Patmos, He said to him, "Write these things to the churches." John kept on writing. His pen flew very fast. And then the Lord, when it was nearly finished, said, "John, before you close the book, put this in: 'The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come.' But there will be some that are deaf, and they cannot hear, so add, 'Let him that is athirst, Come;' and in case there should be any that do not thirst, put it still broader, '*Whosoever will*, let him take of the water of life freely.'" What more can you have than that? And the Book is *sealed*, as it were, with that. It is the last invitation in the Bible. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." You are thirsty. You want water. I hold out this glass to you, and say, "Take it." You say, "If I am decreed to have it, I am not going to put myself to the trouble of taking it." Well, you will never get it. And if you are ever to have salvation, you must reach out the hand and take it. "I will take the cup of Salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." Will you take it to-night? It is simple enough; it is a gift. "The wages of sin is death, but *the gift of God* is eternal life." My dear friends, do not stumble over the doctrine of election any longer. You will not be able to stand up before God and say, "I did not accept the invitation because I was not one of the elect." That excuse will fade away in his presence. God invites every man and woman to the gospel feast when He writes, "Whosoever will, let him take."

I can imagine there is a man down there who says, "That is not my difficulty. I know a man who belongs to the professing Church of Christ, and he cheated me out of five dollars some years ago. There are hypocrites in the Church, and I am not going to have anything to do with it. No! you don't catch me going into company with hypocrites."

Well, I will find you two hypocrites in the world for every one you will find in the Church. Besides, I am not asking you to come to the Church—not but that I believe in churches—but I am asking you to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Come to Christ first, and then we can talk to you about the Church. There

always have been hypocrites in the Church and always will be. One of the twelve apostles turned out to be a hypocrite, and there will be hypocrites in the Church to the end of time. But there will not be one hypocrite at this feast, and if you want to get out of the company of hypocrites you had better make haste and come to Christ. If you do not accept the invitation you will have to spend eternity with them. Suppose every one here were a black-hearted hypocrite, what has that to do with you? "Follow *thou* me," says Christ. You are not to be looking to John, or Peter, or Paul, this man or that, but straight to Christ. You may find many flaws in our characters, but you will find none in Christ's. We find a good many in ourselves, and you may too. But we do not ask you to follow us, but Christ. There will be no hypocrites at the marriage supper of the Lamb; they will all be in the lost world. And if you do not accept the invitation you will have to spend eternity with hypocrites. So if you really object to them, you had better make sure of a place at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

But there is a self-righteous Pharisee here who says, "Well, I don't understand all this talk about conversion; I'm good enough as I am. My excuse will stand, if the others won't. I am not going into that inquiry-room to talk with these people, and beg them to pray for me; I don't need it." And he draws his filthy rags of self-righteousness about him and thinks he is pure in the sight of God and man. My friend, the Word of God says, "There is none righteous, no not one." If you are found with your own garment on, you will be cast out from this feast. He will furnish you with a robe of spotless white if you will accept it, but you need not think you can stand in the presence of the King with these miserable rags of self-righteousness about you. Oh, may the Holy Spirit show you how vile you are in the sight of a holy God. The nearer a man gets to God, the more he abhors himself. You know when a man is getting near to God; he begins to loathe himself. Like Job, he says, "I abhor myself." Like Isaiah, when he saw the holy God, he cries out, "Woe is me, I am undone." Like that holy man Daniel, his comeliness is turned to corruption. May God strip you of your self-righteousness today!

But here is another excuse. If the devil cannot make a man

believe he is good enough without being saved, then he will tell him he is so bad the Lord will have nothing to do with him. A great many in the inquiry-room have that excuse. "I would like to be saved," they say, "but I am too bad." That is another lie. Why, what does the Scripture say? "Christ died for the ungodly." Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners. What did Christ say to his disciples? "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel *to every creature.*" "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name *among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*" The very men whose hands were dripping with the blood of the Son of God, had salvation offered to them! Paul said he was the *chief of sinners*, and if he was saved, surely there is hope for every man on the face of the earth. If you are so bad, you are the very one He wants to save. During our war, I remember the doctor used to go after a battle to look at the wounded men, and he would find out the most desperate cases and attend to them first. That is the way the great Physician does now. He saves the worst men He can get. I know a great many people who are anxious to come, but they are waiting until they grow a little better. They think God will not take them till then.

Now, notice, my friends, the Lord invites you to come just as you are, and if you could make yourself better you would not be any more acceptable to Him. Do not put these filthy rags of self-righteousness about you. God will strip every rag from you when you come to Him, and clothe you with glorious garments. When the war was going on, we would sometimes go to the recruiting office and see a man come in with a silk hat, broadcloth coat, calf-skin boots—his suit might be worth $100; and another man would come in whose clothes were not worth a dollar; but they both had to strip and put on the uniform of the country. And so when we go into Christ's vineyard we must put on the livery of heaven and be stripped of every rag. So, however bad you are, come just as you are, and the Lord will receive you.

I have read of an artist who wanted to paint a picture of the Prodigal Son. He searched through the madhouses, and the poor-houses, and the prisons, to find a man wretched enough to represent the prodigal, but he could not find one. One day he was walk-

ing down the streets and met a man whom he thought would do. He told the poor beggar he would pay him well if he came to his room and sat for his portrait. The beggar agreed, and the day was appointed for him to come. The day came, and a man put in his appearance at the artist's room. "You made an appointment with me," he said, when he was shown into the studio. The artist looked at him, "I never saw you before," he said; "you cannot have an appointment with me." "Yes," he said, "I agreed to meet you to-day at ten o'clock." "You must be mistaken; it must have been some other artist; I was to see a *beggar* here at this hour." "Well," says the beggar, "I am he." "You?" "Yes." "Why, what have you been doing?" "Well, I thought I would dress myself up a bit before I got painted." "Then," said the artist, "I do not want you; I wanted you *as you were; now*, you are no use to me." That is the way Christ wants every poor sinner, just as he is. I think I can hear some one say, "Oh, but my heart is so hard." Well, that is just the very reason you ought to come. If you had not a hard heart you would not need a Saviour. Do you think you can soften your heart? Can you break your heart? Did not God invite the hard-hearted? Did not Christ come to seek and to save that which was lost? It is just because men's hearts are hard that they need a Saviour. So that is no excuse at all. God invites you, and you cannot stand up and say to the Great King you did not accept the invitation because you had a hard heart. He invites "whosoever," and you can come along with your hard heart just as it is.

In the North a minister was talking to a man in the inquiry-room. "My heart is so hard, it seems as if it was chained, and I cannot come," said the inquirer. The minister said to him, "Come along, chain and all;" and he just came to Christ, hard-hearted, chain and all, and Christ snapped the fetters, and set him free just there. If you are bound hands and feet by Satan, it is the work of God to break the fetters; you cannot break them. But, thank God, He can snap the fetters of every sin-bound soul to-night, and set each captive free.

Then comes another excuse. "I should like to come, but somehow or other I do not know that I feel just right." That is a very common excuse,—Feeling, feeling, feeling, feeling! I

have heard that cry till I am sick of it. Suppose a friend invites me to dinner to-day, and I say, "Well, I would like very much to take dinner with you. There is no man I would rather dine with than yourself; but I do not know that I feel just right." "Are you sick?" he might ask. "No, I never felt better in my life." "Well, what do you mean?" "I don't know that I feel just right. I do not know that I will be in a right state of mind." "I do not understand you," he would say. "What do you mean?" "Well, I would like to go very much, but I don't feel right." And that is the way men are talking now. "I would like to go to heaven, but I don't know that I have got the right kind of feeling." But, my friends, if you really want to, God invites you, and that is all about it. My friend urges me to come, but I keep on saying, "I do not know that I am in the right state of mind." "Why," he would say, "I think Mr. Moody must have gone out of his mind. I invited him to dinner, and instead of giving me a plain answer he kept talking about feeling all the time!" You may smile at it, but that is just the way people talk in the inquiry-room—hundreds of them. My friends, does God invite you? If He does, why don't you accept the invitation? If you want to come, just come along, and don't be talking about feeling. Do you think Lazarus had any feeling when Christ called him out of the sepulchre?

My friends, God is above feeling. Do you think you can control your feelings? I am sure if I could control my feelings I never would have any bad feelings, I would always have good feelings. But bear in mind Satan may change our feelings fifty times a day, but he cannot change the Word of God; and what we want is to build our hopes of heaven upon the Word of God. When a poor sinner is coming up out of the pit, and just ready to get his feet upon the Rock of Ages, the devil sticks out a plank of feeling, and says, "Get on that," and when he puts his feet on that, down he goes again. Take one of these texts—"Verily I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth on Him that sent Me, *hath* everlasting life, and *shall not* come into condemnation, but *is passed* from death unto life." My friend, that is worth more than all the feelings that you can have in a whole lifetime. I would a thousand times rather stand on that

verse than on all the frames and feelings I ever had. I took my stand there twenty years ago. Since then the dark waves of hell have come dashing up against me; the waves of persecution have broken all around me; doubts, fears, and unbelief in turn have assailed me; but I have been able to stand firm on this short word of God. It is a sure footing for eternity. It was true 1800 years ago, and it is true to-night. That rock is higher than my feeling. And what we need is to get our feet upon the rock, and the Lord will put a new song in our mouths.

But I hear some one in the gallery say, "He has not touched my case at all. None of these things ever trouble me; but the fact is, *I cannot believe.* I would like to come, but I cannot believe." Not long ago a man said to me, "I cannot believe." "*Whom?*" I asked. He stammered and said again, "I cannot believe." I said, "*Whom?*" "Well," he said, "I *can't* believe." "Whom?" I asked again. At last he said, "I cannot believe myself." "Well, you don't need to. You do not need to put any confidence in yourself. The less you believe in yourself the better. But if you tell me you can't believe God, that is another thing; and I would like to ask you why!" If a man says to me, "I have a great respect for you; I have a great admiration for you; but I do not believe a word you say," I say to myself, "I certainly do not think much of your admiration." But that is the way a good many people talk about God. They say, "I have a profound reverence for God; the very name of God strikes awe to my heart; but I do not believe Him." Why don't you be honest and say at once you *won't* believe? There is no real reason why men cannot believe God. I challenge any infidel on the face of the earth to put his finger on one promise God has ever made that He has not kept. The idea of a man standing up in the afternoon of the nineteenth century and saying he cannot believe God! My friend, you have no reason for not believing Him. If you say you cannot believe man there would be some reason in that, because men very often say what is not true. But God never makes any mistakes. "Has He said it and shall He not make it good?" Believe in God and say as Job says: "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him." Some men talk as if it were a great misfortune that they do not believe.

They seem to look upon it as a kind of infirmity, and think they ought to be sympathized with and pitied. But bear in mind that it is the most damning sin of the world. "When He, the Holy Ghost is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, *because they believe not on Me.*" That is the sin of the world—"because they believe not on Me." That is the very root of sin; and the fruit is bad, for the tree is bad. May God open our eyes to see that He is true, and may we all be led to put our fullest trust in Christ.

But you say, "*I do not know what it is to believe.*" That is another excuse. Well, let me put it differently. Suppose I say *trust* Him—just take Him at his word. Believe that He really invites you—that He wants you to come. If you do not know what it is to believe, will you not just trust God?

But here is another one who says, "I would like to come very much, but *I am afraid I would not hold out.*" Now, I have had a rule for a number of years that has been a great help to me—never to cross a mountain until you come to it. You trust Christ to save you to-night. The devil throws a little straw across your path, and then tries to magnify it and makes you think it is a great mountain. Never mind the mountains; trust Him to-night to save you. If He can save you to-night, He can keep you to-morrow. When you have sat down at the banquet and had one good feast—when you have had one interview with Christ, you will not want to leave Him. I accepted this invitation twenty years ago, and I have never wanted to go back. I have not had to keep myself all these years. I would have been back in twenty-four hours if I had. But thank God, we do not have to keep ourselves. The Lord is my Keeper—my Shepherd, I shall not want. He keeps us. It takes the same grace to keep us that it does to save us. And God has told us that "My grace is sufficient for you."

But some people are not at all afraid of falling away. They are sure that God is quite able to save them, and quite strong enough to keep them. But when you ask them if they are Christians, they say, "Well, you know, *I would like to be, but I have no time.*" If I were to go to the door to-night, and take you by the hand and say, "My friend, why not accept of the

invitation to-night?" some of you would say, "Please just excuse me to-night. I have really no time. I have got some very pressing business to attend to to-morrow morning, and I have to go home as fast as possible to get my night's rest. You must really excuse me." And the mothers would say, "We have to run home and put the children to bed; you must excuse us for this time." So thousands and thousands say they have no time to be religious. But, my friends, what have you done with all the time that God has given you? What have you been doing all these months and years that have rolled away since He gave you birth? Is it true you have no time? What did you do with the 365 days of last year? Had you no time during all these twelve months to seek the Kingdom of God? You spend *twenty years* getting an education to enable you to earn a living for this poor frail body, so soon to be eaten up of worms. You spend *seven or eight years* in learning a trade, that you may earn your daily bread; and yet you have not *five minutes* to accept of this invitation of Christ's! My friend, bear in mind you have yet to find time to die; to stand in the presence of the Judge. And when He calls you to stand before that bar, will you dare to tell Him that you had no time to prepare for the marriage supper of his Son? You have no time? Take time! Let everything else be laid aside until you have accepted of this invitation. Do you not know that it is a lie? If you have not time, take it. "Seek *first* the Kingdom of God." Let the children sit up a little late to-night. Let your business be suspended to-morrow. Suppose you do not get so much money to-morrow. What matter it if you get Christ? Better for a man to be sure of salvation than to "gain the whole world and lose his own soul."

But you say "I would like to become a Christian, but *I have a prejudice against these special meetings*, and against evangelists, and against a layman too. If it was a regular ministry, and it was our regular minister, I would accept the invitation." If that is your difficulty, I can help you out of it. You can just get right up, and go out of the hall, and walk straight over to your minister, and have a talk with him. And if you say you do not want to be converted in a special meeting, there are regular meetings in all the churches throughout the town, and your minister would be heartily

glad to talk with you about your soul. But if you say, "There is a great awakening here in this city, and I do not like to be converted in the time of a revival," you can step into a train, and go to some town where there is no revival. We can find you some place where there is no revival, and some church where there is not much of the revival spirit, without very much difficulty. If you really want to go, pray don't give that for an excuse. How wise the devil is! When the church is cold, and everything is dead, men say, "Oh, well, if there was only some life in the church I might become a Christian; if we could only just have a wave of blessing from heaven, it would be so easy then." Then when the wave does come they say, "Oh, no, we are afraid of excitement, and afraid of these special meetings. We are afraid something will be done that won't be just in accordance with our ideas of propriety." Oh, my friends, do not listen to these subtle lies. Just come as you are to Christ, and accept the offer which He makes you now.

I wish I had time to go on with these excuses, but they are as numerous as the hairs of my head. And if I could go on, and tried to exhaust them all, the devil would just help you to make more. The best thing you can do is to tie them all into one bundle, and stamp them as a pack of lies; not a single one of them is true. And God will sweep them all away some day if you do not do it now. It is a very solemn thought that God will excuse you if you want to be excused. He does not wish to do it, but He *will* do it. "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel." Look at the Jewish nation. They wanted to be excused from the feast. They despised the grace of God and trampled it under foot, and look at them to-day! Yes, it is easy enough to say, "I pray Thee have me excused," but by-and-by God may take you at your word, and say, "Yes, I will excuse you." And in that lost world, while others who have accepted the invitation sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb, amid shouts and hallelujahs in heaven, you will be crying in the company of the lost, "The harvest is past; the summer is ended, and we are not saved."

And remember, it is the King of kings, the Lord of glory, who invites you to this feast. Come just as you are, and accept the invitation. Let the plough stand in the furrow until you have accepted it. Let the shop be closed till then; let business be suspended until you have accepted it. Let the land rest; yes, let the ox stand in the stall, until you have accepted that invitation. Make sure, whatever you do, that you will not be missing from the marriage supper of the Lamb. That sainted mother of yours will be there. That little child who died a few months ago will be there. Young lady! do you want to be excused? He will excuse you. Do you want to be excused, young man? He will excuse you. You may make light of it to-night, if you choose. "Oh no," you say, "I never do that; whatever I have been guilty of, I have never done that!" Have you not? Suppose I get an invitation to dinner to-morrow; I take it and tear it up; I do not answer it; I pay no attention to it. Is not that making light of it? How many of you will go away to-night paying no attention to this invitation? Every one who goes home in a careless spirit, won't he be making light of it? The Lord has invited you to the gospel feast. Are you going to spend this evening in accepting or in making light of the invitation? God does not want you to die; He wants you to accept this invitation and live. If you have a good excuse, one that will stand the light of eternity, hold on to it. Do not give it up for anything. Take it down with you into the grave. Hold it firm, take it to the bar of God, and tell it out to Him. But if you have got one that won't stand the test of eternity, give it up. If you have an excuse that will not stand the piercing eye of God, I beg of you as a friend, give it up to-night. Let it go to the four winds of heaven, and accept the invitation to be at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Do not let the laughing, scoffing, mocking world laugh your soul into eternal death. Do as the pilgrim, whom John Bunyan describes, who started out from the City of Destruction, crying, "Life, life, eternal life!" Set your face like a flint towards that blessed land and say, "By the grace of God, I will be at the marriage supper of the Lamb.'

Supposing we should write out here to-night this excuse. How would it sound? "*To the King of Heaven. While sitting in the*

——— *Hall, City of* ———, *July* —, 1885, *I received a very pressing invitation from one of your servants to be present at the marriage supper of your only-begotten Son.* I PRAY THEE HAVE ME EXCUSED." Would you sign that, young man? Would you, mother? Would you come up to the reporters' table, take up a pen and put your name down to such an excuse? You would say, "Let my right hand forget its cunning, and my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I sign that." I doubt if there is one here who would sign it. Will you then pay no attention to God's invitation? I beg of you do not make light of it. It is a loving God inviting you to a feast, and God is not to be mocked. Go play with the forked lightning, go trifle with pestilence and disease, but trifle not with God.

Just let me write out another answer. "*To the King of Heaven. While sitting in the* ——— *Hall, July* —, 1885, *I received a pressing invitation from one of your messengers to be present at the marriage supper of your only-begotten Son. I hasten to reply,* BY THE GRACE OF GOD I WILL BE PRESENT." Who will sign that? Is there one who will put his name to it? Is there no one who will say, "By the grace of God I will accept the invitation now"? May God bring you to a decision just now. If you would ever see the kingdom of God, you must decide this question one way or the other. What will you do with the invitation? I bring it to you in the name of my Master; will you accept or reject it? Be wise to-night, and accept of the invitation. Make up your mind you will not go away till the question of eternity is settled. May God bring hundreds to a decision to-night is the prayer of my heart.

THE BLOOD.

Part I.—The Old Testament

"It is the Blood that maketh an atonement for the Soul."—Lev. xvii. 11.

Every man should be able to give a reason for the hope that is in him; and I do not believe the man lives who can give a reason for his hope beyond the grave, who is a stranger to the Blood. I am often told that I make the plan of salvation too easy, and that it is folly to say that men can be saved by trusting simply to the atoning blood of Christ. Now I do not wish any one to believe what I say, if it is not according to Scripture; and the best way is just to turn up the Bible and see what the Word of God says about it.

The first portion of Scripture I would call your attention to is from the very first book of the Bible. If you turn to Genesis iii. 21, you find, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." In this verse we get the first glimpse of the blood. Certainly God could not have clothed Adam and Eve with the skins of beasts unless He had shed blood. And to me it is a very sweet thought that sin was covered before Adam was driven out of Eden—that God dealt in grace with him before He dealt in judgment. It may be that this was a type, away back in Eden, of Christ the coming One, of the Sacrifice to be slain; and Adam might have said to his wife, "Well, even though God has driven us out of Eden He loves us, and this coat is a token of his love." Some one has said God put a lamp of promise into his hand before He drove him out. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent." Did you ever think what a terrible state of things it would be if man in his lost and ruined state were allowed to live for ever? It was from

love to Adam that God drove him out of Eden, that he should not live for ever. God put the cherubim there with the flaming sword. But now Christ has come and taken the sword into his own bosom, and opened wide the gates, so that man can come in and eat. Adam might have been in Eden ten thousand years and then be led astray by Satan; but now "our life is hid with Christ in God." Yes, man is safer with the second Adam out of Eden than with the first Adam in Eden.

Then let us turn to Gen. iv. 4: "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell." Now here were two boys who were born and brought up outside of Eden. They were children of the same parents, and brought up under precisely similar circumstances and under the same influences, and there is no account of any difference between these two boys until they go to offer sacrifice. Abel brings the blood, and is accepted; Cain comes in his own way, and is rejected. Undoubtedly, when our first parents fell, God marked out the way by which man might come to Him; Abel walked in God's way, but Cain in his own. You may have wondered why Cain's offering was not just as acceptable to Him as Abel's; but one took God's way and the other took his own Perhaps Cain said he could not bear the sight of blood, and took that which God had *cursed,* and laid it on the altar. Perhaps he said to himself, "I shall certainly not bring a bleeding lamb. I don't like that doctrine at all. Here is the grain and the beautiful fruit which I have raised by my industry, and I'm sure it looks better than blood." And there are a great many Cainites in the church to-day. They are trying to get into heaven their own way. They bring their own good deeds to God. They prefer what is agreeable to the eye, as Cain did his beautiful corn and fruit; but they do not like the doctrine of the Blood of the Atonement. From the time Adam left Eden there have been Abelites and Cainites. The Abelites come by way of the blood—the Cainites come in a way of their own. They wish to get rid of the doctrine of the blood. But be assured that any religion which makes light of the blood is of the devil. No matter how

eloquent a man is, if he preaches against the blood he is doing the devil's work. Do not listen to him. Do not believe him. If an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel I would not believe it. "Christ died for our sins,"—that is the gospel that Paul preached, and Peter preached, and that God has always honoured in the salvation of men's souls.

The next glimpse we get of the blood is in Gen. viii. 20. "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar." We have passed out of the first dispensation and now have come to the second; and the very first thing Noah does, is to put blood between him and his sins. The second dispensation is founded upon blood. Thus Noah walked by the highway of the blood; for this the animals were taken through the flood; and all God's people have been walking that way since, for it is the blood that atones for sin.

Would you turn to Gen. xxii. 13. "And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham, went and took the ram and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son." God loved Abraham so much that He spared his son, but He so loved the world that He did not spare his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. Now we are told that Abraham saw Christ's day and was glad. I do not know when he saw it, but I have an idea that it was from this very place that God drew back the curtain of time and showed him Christ as the Bearer of sin. Just look at that scene. There is the altar, built at the command of Jehovah. God had told him to take his son, his only son whom he loved, and bind and slay him. He has bound the boy; everything is ready, and now he takes the knife to slay his son. He does not know what it means, but *God said it* and he obeys. I wish we had men like Abraham, now-a-days, willing to obey God in the dark, not asking the reason why. I can see him put his arms round his boy as he takes him to his bosom and weeps over him. I can hear him telling him the secret he had hidden from him so long. What a scene! What a struggle it must have been! Now he is ready to plunge the knife into the heart of his son. But hark! there comes a voice from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!

spare thy son." Ah! there was no voice at Calvary, no cry from heaven then, "Spare thy Son." He gave Him up freely for us all, the Innocent for the guilty, the Just for the unjust.

Turn now to Exodus xii.—one of the most important chapters in the Old Testament. At the thirteenth verse we read, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you." God did not say, "When I see your good deeds—how you have prayed, and wept, and groaned, I will pass over you," but "*when I see the blood.*" It was not their good resolutions, their tears, their prayers, their works, their faith, that saved those men in Egypt; it was the blood. What were they to do to be saved? They were to put the blood on the door-posts and lintel. They were not to put it on the threshold. God would not have them trample upon the blood. But that is what the world is doing to-day. Men say it is not the death of Christ; it is his life. But God did not say, "Take a white, spotless lamb, and put it there at the front of the door, and when I see the lamb I will pass over you." Had an Israelite done that, the angel of death would have passed by the lamb; would have entered that house; would have laid his cold hand on the eldest born. A live lamb could not have kept death out that night; he would have fallen a victim like the Egyptian. Very likely, when some of the lords and dukes and great men rode through Goshen, and saw the Israelites sprinkling their dwellings, they said they never saw such foolishness. Very likely they thought they were just spoiling their houses. Every house had blood on it. No Egyptian could understand it. But on that memorable night when Death entered every house from the palace of the king to the hovel of the poor, when the wail of sorrow went up from that stricken land, it was the blood that kept him from the homes of Goshen. Yes, it is the blood that must cover our sins. I beg of you, do not let the world move you on this point. Let it go on mocking, and laughing, and making light of the precious blood of the Son of God. It is our only refuge, our only hope. We cannot cover sin by any good deeds of our own. It is a very common saying, "If I were only as good as that man who has preached the gospel for fifty years, or that mother in Israel who has visited the

sick and been so kind to the poor, I would feel safe for heaven." But I want to say that if you are sheltered behind the blood of the Son of God, you are as safe as any saint that ever walked this earth. It is not a long life of good deeds that is going to save us. It is not our Christian usefulness that will ever commend us to God. Certainly we must work for Christ; certainly it will be better for you in the future if you do. But that is not salvation. Certainly you must follow Christ; certainly you must imitate his pure and holy life. I would go further, and say it is an *absolute necessity* you should do so; but the life of Christ may be preached for ever, and if his death be left out, it will never save a soul. People say you must work, work, work, in order to get salvation. Ten thousand times no! You get it as a gift; "Whosoever will, *let him take*." You can work as much as you like after you have taken it. "Work out your own salvation." Yes, but that was spoken to Christians, people who had taken it. So we must first take it, and then we can work it out. We take salvation as a gift and then begin to work because we cannot help it. All work done before that must go for nothing. When the angel of death swept through the land that night, the good and the bad were destroyed together. Into every house where the blood was not sprinkled, the destroying angel came. But wherever the blood was on doorpost and lintel, whether they had worked much, or whether they had worked none, God passed them over.

The little child in the humblest tent was just as safe as Moses or Aaron, as Joshua or Caleb, as safe as any in the land. God did not say, "When I see your gilded palace, or your beautiful home; when I see your goodness, your life of service, or your faith," but, "when I see the blood, *it* shall be a token." Not for their own sakes, but for Christ's, did He pass them by that night. Some one has said, that the little fly in Noah's ark was just as safe as the great elephant. It was the ark that saved them both. So Christ saves the weak disciple just as well as the strong one.

When you go to a railway station you find all classes of people wishing to travel. They have their tickets and take their places in the carriages. When the conductor comes to ask for the tickets, he does not look to see what or who you are. You may be rich or poor, learned or unlearned, this or that; he looks for the *tickets*,

and if you have your ticket you pass. The ticket is the *token.* So if you are sheltered behind the blood of Christ, you may be very ignorant or poor in this world, but you are as safe as the wisest or wealthiest.

A great many people are wondering why they are so weak; why they fall so often when temptation comes, why so little spiritual power is given them. I think you will find a lesson in that same chapter, in the 11th verse: "Thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the Lord's Passover." They were not only to kill the lamb and take the blood and sprinkle it on the door-posts, but they were to *eat* of it. That is the way to get spiritual strength. The reason why we are such sickly Christians, is because we do not feed on the Lamb. We have a wilderness journey before us as the children of Israel had, and if we do not feed upon Christ we must starve by the way. We have not only to look to the blood for safety, but we must feed on Christ for strength. How much the soul needs to be fed! Day by day our souls must be fed with the heavenly manna. The Lord has given Him up for us; He calls Himself the Bread of Life. Feeding upon Christ is feeding on his Word. There is no book that will feed the soul but the Bible. If I feed on the Word of God, I get spiritual strength and power. Some people think if they get one glimpse at Christ it is enough. We must live by faith as well as be saved by faith. The just shall live by faith. Each day we must gather the manna afresh. A good many people seem to be living on stale manna—manna that they got months or years ago when they were converted. We should no more think of laying in spiritual food to last for ten years than we should of bodily food.

In verse 2 we read, "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months. It shall be the first month of the year to you." For 400 years they had been serving the king of the Egyptians, but God would not let them count those years. They must make a fresh start, as it were. So all the years that we spend in the service of the devil go for nought. Life never really begins until we have been sprinkled with the blood of Christ. Everything dates from the blood, and even the Jew

has to own that the death upon the cross was the beginning of days.

Turn now to Exodus xxix. 16: "And thou shalt slay the ram, and thou shalt take his blood and sprinkle it round about upon the altar." I used to read these words and these books of the Old Testament, wondering what they meant. They were to take the blood and sprinkle it "round about upon the altar." Now I think I understand it. It teaches that there is no way of approaching God without coming by the blood. It has been so in all ages. Even Aaron, the high priest, had to take blood and sprinkle it round about upon the altar, before he could have an interview with God—teaching us the great lesson that approach to God never has been, never will be, never can be, except through the blood of the Lamb.

We have the same thing brought before us again in the thirtieth verse of the tenth chapter. "And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of the altar, once in a year, with the blood of the sin-offering of atonements; once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it is most holy unto the Lord." Atonement means at-one-ment; the blood of Christ makes the sinner and God at one. Before Adam fell God had bound him to the throne with a golden chain, which was broken by the fall. But Christ came down and linked man back to God again. *At-one-ment*—that is what the blood of Christ does, makes atonement. We talk about sins being forgiven; they are forgiven, but no sin ever committed in this world was forgiven without being punished. They were punished in Christ; He made expiation—"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." Think what it cost Christ to make expiation. Think what it cost God when He had to give up his only-begotten Son, to give Him up to die!

Turn for a moment to Leviticus viii. 23: "And he slew it, and Moses took of the blood of it and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot." That is another verse I used to stumble over. What did it mean? blood on the ear, blood on the hand, blood on the foot? I think I understand it now. *Blood on the ear*—without it man cannot hear the voice of God. No

uncircumcised ear can hear his voice. Men heard the voice of God and they said it thundered; they did not know the difference. But when the blood is applied, men know the voice of God—we know that it is the voice of our loving Father in heaven.

Blood on the hand—that a man may work for God. Those men that think they are working for God, and yet ignore the blood, are deceiving their own souls. One day they will wake up to find that their labour is in vain. Salvation is "*to him that worketh not* but believeth." No man can work his way into the kingdom of God. They said to Christ, "What shall we do that we may work the works of God?" Perhaps these men had got their pockets full of money, and were ready and willing to build churches. "This is the work of God," said Christ, "that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." No man or woman can do anything to please God until they have believed on his Son.

Suppose I say to my boy, "Willie, I want you to go out and get me a glass of water." He says he doesn't want to go. "I didn't ask you whether you wanted to go or not, Willie; I told you to go." "But I don't want to go," he says. "I tell you, you must go and get me a glass of water." He does not like to go. But he knows I am very fond of grapes, and he is very fond of them himself, so he goes out, and some one gives him a beautiful cluster of grapes. He comes in and says, "Here, papa, here is a beautiful cluster of grapes for you." "But what about the water?" "Won't the grapes be acceptable, papa?" "No, my boy, the grapes are not acceptable; I won't take them; I want you to get me a glass of water." The little fellow doesn't want to get the water, but he goes out, and this time some one gives him an orange. He brings it in and places it before me. "Is that acceptable?" he asks. "No, no, no!" I say; "I want nothing but water; you cannot do anything to please me until you get the water." And so, my friends, to please God you must first obey Him; and the first thing He asks us to do is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." He has given us an unspeakable Gift—the Son of his bosom—and if we reject that Son, and refuse to follow Him, do you think anything else we can do can please Him?

Blood upon the foot—to walk with God. God never walked

with the Israelites until the blood was sprinkled in Goshen. Then nothing could stand before them. When they came to the Red Sea, it fled at their approach. In the wilderness He opened his hand and gave them manna to eat. When they came to Jordan they walked dryshod through the bed of the river, because the Almighty God was walking beside them. Yes, it was a blood-bought people that God brought into Canaan, the promised land. And God will walk with every blood-washed sinner, and no man shall stand before Him.

I can imagine some of you saying, "I do not understand yet why God demands blood." A person said to me, "I hate your God; your God demands blood. I don't believe in such a God—*my* God is merciful to all; I do not know your God." But if you will turn to Lev. xvii. 11, you will find why God demands blood. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

Now, suppose Queen Victoria did not like any man to be deprived of his liberty, and threw all her prisons open, and was so merciful that she could not bear any one to suffer for guilt, how long would she hold the sceptre? How long would she rule her empire? Not twenty-four hours. Those very men who cry out about God being merciful would say, "We don't want such a Queen." Well, God is merciful, but He is not going to take an unpardoned sinner into heaven.

God demands blood, because He said to Adam, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Then sin came into the world, and brought death in. God's word must be kept. How could God do this and spare the sinner? How could God be just, and justify the ungodly? Man has sinned, and man must die. But what if some one should die instead of him? His own life has been forfeited—the wages of sin is death—but what if some one should *buy it back* for him, should *redeem* him? What if one should come forward and lay down his own life a ransom for many—one who had no sins of his own to condemn him to death? Glory to God in the highest! "God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Glory to God in the

highest! He sent his Son, born of a woman, to take our nature and die in our stead, tasting death for every man. Glory to God in the highest! "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." If you read your Bibles carefully, you will see the scarlet thread running right through every page of them. The blood commences to flow in Genesis, and runs on to Revelation. That is what God's book is written for. Take out the scarlet thread, and it would not be worth carrying home.

Three times in this chapter it is repeated, that the life of the flesh is in the blood. And when God demands blood, in other words, He demands life. It has been forfeited. We have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. I must die for my sins, or find some substitute to die in my stead. I cannot get this man or that man to die for me, because they have sinned themselves, and have to die for their own sins. But Christ was without sin, and therefore He could be my substitute. Here comes in the glorious doctrine of substitution. Christ died for our sins, for mine; and because He died for me, I love Him. Because He died for me I will serve Him. I will work for Him; I will give Him my very life. He robbed death of its sting, and the grave of its victory. Oh! is it not the least we can do to give our poor lives to Him?

When the Californian gold fever broke out, a man went there, leaving his wife in New England with his boy. As soon as he got on and was successful he was to send for them. It was a long time before he succeeded, but at last he got money enough to send for them. The wife's heart leaped for joy. She took her boy to New York, got on board a Pacific steamer, and sailed away to San Francisco. They had not been long at sea before the cry of "Fire! fire!" rang through the ship, and rapidly it gained on them. There was a powder magazine on board, and the captain knew the moment the fire reached the powder, every man, woman, and child must perish. They got out the life-boats, but they were too small! In a minute they were overcrowded. The last one was just pushing away, when the mother pled with them to take her and her boy. "No," they said, "we have got as many as we can hold." She entreated them so earnestly, that at last they said they would take one more. Do you think she leaped into that boat and left her boy to die? No! She seized her boy, gave him one

last hug, kissed him, and dropped him over into the boat. "My boy," she said, "if you live to see your father, tell him that I died in your place." That is a faint type of what Christ has done for us. He laid down his life for us, He died that we might live. Now will you not love Him? What would you say of that young man if he should speak contemptuously of such a mother? She went down to a watery grave to save her son. Well, shall we speak contemptuously of such a Saviour? Oh, may God make us loyal to Christ! My friends, you will need Him one day. You will need Him when you come to cross the swellings of Jordan. You will need Him when you stand at the bar of God. May God forbid that when death draws nigh it should find you making light of the precious blood of Christ!

THE BLOOD.

Part II.—The New Testament.

"Without shedding of blood is no remission."—Heb. ix. 22.

We have seen what the Old Testament says about the blood; now let us turn to the New.

In 1 Pet. i. 18, we read: "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Silver and gold could not redeem our souls. As I have tried to show, life had been forfeited. Death had come into the world by sin, and nothing but blood could atone for the soul. Therefore, says Peter, "you are not redeemed with silver and gold." If gold and silver could have redeemed us, do you not think that God would have created millions of worlds full of gold? It would have been an easy matter for Him. But we are not redeemed by such corruptible things, but by the precious blood of Christ. Redemption means "buying back;" we had sold ourselves for nought, and Christ redeemed us and bought us back.

A friend in Ireland once met a little Irish boy who had caught a sparrow. The poor little bird was trembling in his hand, and seemed very anxious to escape. The gentleman begged the boy to let it go, as the bird could not do him any good; but the boy said he would not, for he had chased it three hours before he could catch it. He tried to reason it out with the boy, but in vain. At last he offered to buy the bird; the boy agreed to the price, and it was paid. Then the gentleman took the poor little thing and held it out on his hand. The boy had been holding it very fast, for

the boy was stronger than the bird, just as Satan is stronger than we, and there it sat for a time scarcely able to realize the fact that it had got liberty; but, in a little, it flew away chirping, as if to say to the gentleman, "Thank you! thank you! you have redeemed me." That is what redemption is — buying back and setting free. So Christ came to break the fetters of sin, to open the prison doors and set the sinner free. This is the good news, the Gospel of Christ—"Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ."

"How can I be saved to-night," do you ask? Accept of the Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ, and rest on his finished work. When Christ on Calvary said, "It is finished," it was the shout of the Conqueror. He had come to redeem the world, and now He had done it—done it without money! And his cry to the world comes ringing down the ages to-day—"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; yea, come, buy wine and milk *without money and without price.*"

A few years ago, I was going away to preach one Sunday morning, when a young man drove up in front of us. He had an aged woman with him. "Who is that young man?" I asked. "Do you see that beautiful meadow?" said my friend, "and that land there with the house upon it?" "Yes." "His father drank that all up," he said. Then he went on to tell me all about him. His father was a great drunkard, squandered his property, died, and left his wife in the poor-house. "And that young man," he said, "is one of the finest young men I ever knew. He has toiled hard and earned money, and bought back the land; he has taken his mother out of the poor-house, and now he is taking her to church." I thought, that is an illustration for me. The first Adam, in Eden, sold us for nought, but the Messiah, the Second Adam, came and bought us back again. The first Adam brought us *to the poor-house,* as it were; the Second Adam makes us kings and priests unto God. That is redemption. We get in Christ all that Adam lost, and more. Men look on the blood of Christ with scorn and contempt, but the time is coming when the blood of Christ will be worth more than all the kingdoms of the world. Suppose you were going down to death's gates to-night, going down to the brink of the Jordan, without any hope in Christ.

Suppose you were a millionnaire, what would your millions be worth then? The blood of Christ would be worth more to you than all the silver and gold of the world.

The blood has two cries: it cries either for my condemnation, or if you will allow me to use a stronger word, for my damnation; or it cries for my salvation. If I reject the blood of Christ, it cries out for my condemnation; if I accept it, it cries out for pardon and peace. The blood of Abel cried out against his brother Cain. So it was in the days of Christ. When Pilate had Christ on his hands, he said to the Jews, "What shall I do with Him?" They cried out, "Away with Him! crucify Him!" And when he asked which one he should release, Barabbas or Christ, they cried out, "Barabbas!" Then when he asked again, "What shall I then do with Him?" a universal shout went up from Jerusalem, "Let Him be crucified! Away with Him! We do not want Him." Pilate turned and washed his hands, and said, "I am innocent of this just Man's blood," and they cried, "His blood be on us and on our children; *We* shall take the responsibility of it; *we* shall endorse the act; you crucify Him, and let his blood be on us and on our children." Would to God that there might be a cry going up, "Let his blood be on us to save, not to condemn."

Turn now to Col. i. 20: "Having made peace through the blood of his cross." I can tell you there is no peace in the world. There are many rich men, many great men in the world, who have got no peace. No; I have never seen a man who knew what peace was until he got it at Calvary.

"Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans v. 1). Sin covered—that brings peace. There is no peace for the wicked; they are like the troubled sea that cannot rest. Calvary is the place to find peace—peace for the past and grace for the present. But there is something better still. "And rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Some people think that when they get to Calvary they have got the best, but there is something better in store—glory. I do not know how near it may be to us; it may be that some of us will be ushered very soon into the presence of the King. One gaze at Him will be enough to reward us for all we have had to bear. Yes, there is peace for the past, grace for the present, and glory

for the future. These are three things that every child of God ought to have. When the angels came bringing the gospel, they proclaimed, "Glory to God, peace on earth, and good-will towards men." That is what the blood brings—sin covered and taken away, peace for the past, grace for the present, and glory for the future.

Would you now turn to John xix. 34: "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water." You know that in Zechariah it was foretold that there should be opened in the house of David a fountain for sin and for uncleanness. And now we have it opened. The Son of God has been pierced by that Roman soldier's spear. It seems to me that that was the crowning act of earth and hell—the crowning act of sin. Look at that Roman soldier as he pushed his spear into the very heart of the God-man. What a hellish deed! But what was the next thing that took place? Blood covered the spear! Oh! thank God, the blood covers sin. There was the blood covering that spear—the very point of it. The very crowning act of sin brought out the crowning act of love; the crowning act of wickedness was the crowning act of grace.

A usurper has got this world now; but Christ will have it soon. The time of your redemption draweth nigh. A little more suffering, and He returns to set up his kingdom and reign upon the earth. He will rend the heavens, and his voice will be heard again. He shall descend from heaven with a shout. He will sway his sceptre from the river to the ends of the earth. The thorn and the brier shall be swept away and the wilderness shall rejoice. Let us rejoice; we shall see better days; the dreary darkness and sin that sweep along our earth shall be done away with. These dark waves of death and hell shall be beaten back. Oh, let us pray to the Lord to hasten his coming, that the Son of God may not tarry.

Would you now turn to Rom. iii. 24: "Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." What God does He does freely, because He loves to do it. Mark these words, "Through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Then in the fifth chapter, ninth verse, we read, "Much more then,

being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." The sinner is justified with God by his matchless grace through the blood of his Son. Justified, that means, as just as if he had never committed sin. What a wonderful thing; not one sin against him! It is as if he owed some one a debt, and when he went to pay it, was told, "There is nothing against you; it is all settled." "Why," he would say, "how is that? I got some things from you not long ago, and I want to pay the bill." "There is nothing against you." "But I am sure I got something here." "There is nothing against you in my ledger; some one else has come and paid it." That is substitution. Now I know who paid my spiritual debts. It was the Lord Jesus Christ. And God looks at his ledger and there is nothing against us. Christ was raised up for our justification. It is a good deal better to be justified than pardoned. Suppose I was arrested for stealing $1000, tried and found guilty, but suppose the judge had mercy on me and pardoned me. I would come out of prison, but it would be with my head down. I had been found guilty, I could never face the world again. But suppose I was accused of stealing it, but it could not be proven, and when the case came on, it was found I had not done anything of the kind; then I would be *justified.* It would make all the difference in the world. Now God *justifies* us by the blood of his Son. That is what the blood does—sin covered, put out of the way, and nothing against us. Is not that good news?

Rev. i. 5: "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." There are a great many people who wish to be saved, but who think they cannot be saved until they get a little better. I met a young man in the inquiry-room last night who was anxious to be saved, but he thought he could not be, because he was not good enough. If you are going to wait till you get rid of your sins, you will never be saved. You cannot get rid of one sin. Instead of getting better you will get worse. But thanks be to God, He loves us even in our sins, even before He saves us from our sins. "He hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." *Loved us* first, then washed us. But if we attempt to wash ourselves we will make wretched work of it. The blood will cover it all up if we only trust

ourselves to Christ. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? If He has justified me it is enough. Why do we like to sing that old hymn—

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins?"

Why will it live as long as the church lives on earth? Why will it never die? Why do you hear it sung all over Christendom? I remember how it used to thrill my soul even before I was converted. I could not tell why. Thank God, every sin is lost in that fountain. You will find that all these hymns with the scarlet thread in them will live. There is that grand old hymn:—

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side that flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

That speaks of the crucified Christ; it will never get worn out. Then there is—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come."

That is another hymn that will live; you never tire of it. It will be sung on and on, as long as the church is on earth. I tell you why these hymns are so precious; it is because they tell us about the blood.

Look at Matt. xxvi. 28,—it is Christ's own testimony—"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Look at this verse, "I declare unto you the gospel, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." Look at Heb. ix. 22, "And without shedding of blood is no remission." I would like to ask those men who do not believe in the blood, "What are you going to do with your sins?" Would you insult the Almighty by offering Him the fruit of your body to atone for them? Can a *man* atone for sin? If there is a scoffer here, a man who makes light of the blood, I

want to know what he is going to do? When I was in one of your cities, a gentleman came to me and said, "If you are right, I am wrong; and if I am right, you are wrong." I saw he was a minister, and I said, "Well, I never heard you preach; if you have heard me you can tell what the difference is. Where do we differ?" "Well, you preach that it is the death of Christ; I preach his life. I tell people his death has nothing to do with it; you tell them his life has nothing to do with their salvation, and that his death only will save them. I do not believe a word of it." "Well," I said, "what do you do with this passage, 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree'?" "Well, I never preached on that text." "What do you do with this, then, 'Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ'?" I never preached on that text either," was the reply. "Well, what do you do with this, 'Without shedding of blood there is no remission'?" "I never spoke on that," he said. "What do you do with this, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon Him'?" "I never preached on that either." "What *do* you preach, then?" I asked. He hesitated for a little, and then said, "I preach moral essays." "You leave out the atonement?" "Yes." "Well," I said, "it would all be a sham to me if I did that; I could not understand it. I would be away home to-morrow. I would not know what to preach. Moral essays on Christ without his death!" The young man said, "Well, it does seem a sham sometimes." He was honest enough to confess that. Why, the whole thing is a myth without the at-one-ment. The crucifixion of Christ is the foundation of the whole matter. If a man is unsound on the blood, he is unsound in everything. "Without shedding of blood is no remission."

Turn now to Heb. x. 11. Hebrews is full of the blood. "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this man" —what man?—the man Christ Jesus, "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God." One sacrifice for sins for ever! He has offered as a sacrifice *Himself.* You need no lambs now, no bullocks now. The High Priest

has offered Himself. The high priest of old could not take his seat; his work was never done. But our great High Priest went up on high, and took his seat on the right hand of the Father's throne: the work was done. "It is finished," He said. All those types and shadows are fulfilled in Him, and now they have vanished away.

Look at Mark xiv. 24: "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many." These are Christ's own words. Take that in connection with the passage I read from Hebrews, "Without shedding of blood is no remission." I believe if a man could get to heaven without the blood of Christ, he would not be happy there. He could not join in the great song that is sung around the throne; he could not sing the song of Moses and the Lamb; he could not say he was redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. You would see him away in some corner; he would be out of tune with the rest; he would not be in harmony with them, and he would not wish to stay there. But he could not get there. The only way is by the new and living way that Christ has opened.

Turn back again for a minute to Heb. x. 19: "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." Those Jews, before Christ died, had to have the high priest intercede for them. He used to go in once a year into the holy of holies with blood to make intercession; but since Christ, our great High Priest, came, we do not need any Aaron to intercede for us. When Christ died, He opened a new and living way. He made us all kings and priests. It is said that the veil that was rent was his flesh. When He cried on the cross, "It is finished," the veil of the temple was rent in twain. God seized it with his right hand and tore it away. No veil between God and man now! We need no bishop, no pope, no priest to intercede for us now. Christ has died, yea, is risen again. Yes, we are all kings and priests now; we can go straight to the holy of holies ourselves. We need no man to intercede for our souls. The moment a man is saved by the blood, he becomes a king and a priest. God calls him "My son." He is an heir of heaven and of glory. He is redeemed by the blood; he is made

nigh by the blood. He gets victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, by the blood.

There is a very solemn verse in Heb. x. 28: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" If a man despised Moses' law, they led him out and stoned him to death. Sinner, let me ask you, what are you going to do with the blood of God's only Son? I tell you it is a terrible thing to make light of the blood, to laugh and ridicule the doctrine of the blood. I would rather fall dead on this platform than do such a thing. It makes my heart shudder when I hear men speak lightly of it. Some time ago a very solemn thought came stealing over me, and made a deep impression on my mind. The only thing that Christ left of his body on the earth was his blood. His flesh and bones He took away. But when He went up on high, He left his blood down here. What are you going to do with the blood? Are you going to make light of this blood, to trample on it? May God give us all a glimpse of Christ crucified to-night.

I wish I had time to go on and talk about the blood in Revelation; it is full of it. "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony." That is the only way to overcome the devil, the lion of hell—by the blood of the Lamb. He knows that the moment a poor sinner flees to the blood he is beyond his reach.

As I have travelled up and down Christendom I have found out that a minister who gives a clear sound upon this doctrine is successful. A man who covers up the cross, though he may be an intellectual man, and draw large crowds, will have no life there, and his church will be but a gilded sepulchre. Those men who preach the doctrine of the cross, and hold up Christ as the sinner's only hope of heaven, and as the sinner's only substitute, who make much of the blood, God honours, and souls are always saved in the church where the blood of Christ is preached. May God help us to make much of the blood of his Son. It cost God so much to give us His Son, and shall we try to keep Him from the world

which is perishing from the want of Him? The world can get along without us, but not without Christ. Let us preach Christ in season and out of season. Let us go to the sick and dying, and hold up the Saviour who came to seek and save them—who died to redeem them. "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony."

Once more, in Revelation vii. 14: "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Sinner, how are you going to get your robes clean if you do not get them washed in the blood of the Lamb? How are you going to wash them? Can you make them clean? I pray that at last we may all get back to the paradise above. There they are singing the sweet song of redemption. May it be the happy lot of each of us to join them. It will be a few years at the longest before we shall be there to sing the sweet song of Moses and the Lamb. But if you die without Christ, without hope, and without God, where will you be? O sinner, be wise; do not make light of the blood. An aged minister of the gospel, on his dying bed, said, "Bring me the Bible." Putting his finger upon the verse, "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin," he said, "I die in the hope of this verse." It was not his fifty years' preaching, but the blood of Christ. May God grant that when we come at last to stand before the great white throne, our robes may be washed in the cleansing blood of Christ!

HEAVEN.

Part I.

Some time ago, on my way to a meeting, a friend asked what was to be my subject. I told him I thought I would preach about Heaven. He seemed much disappointed, and replied that he was in hopes I should talk about something practical, and that there would be time enough to talk about heaven when we got there.

Now, I think if God did not want us to know anything about heaven, He would not have written so much about it. And if heaven is to be our future home, we should try to learn all we can about it, so that we may be living more for it. If we were about to emigrate to a distant land, we should never tire hearing about it. We should wish to know all about its people, its climate and resources, its schools and institutions, its advantages for children, and its prospects for business. There would be nothing relating to the country that would not interest us. And when we are going to spend eternity in another world, can we know or hear too much about it?

Christians are often asked why they address their prayers *upwards,* as if God's dwelling-place were any more above than around them. But I think it is right to locate heaven, and to locate it *above.* In the twenty-sixth chapter of Deuteronomy we read, "Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, and bless thy people Israel." *Look down* from heaven. Then in Genesis we are told that God "went up" from talking with Abraham—*went up.* And Christ himself, the only One who can really tell us about heaven, for He has been there, what does He

say? In the third chapter of John you find the words, "No man hath ascended *up* to heaven but He that came *down* from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven." In the seventh chapter of Mark, again we are told that, "looking *up* to heaven, He sighed." And when his work was over here, and He was just returning to the many mansions of his Father's house, standing in the midst of the loved ones for whom He was going to prepare a place, "Behold, He was taken *up*, and a cloud received Him out of their sight."

Heaven is the dwelling-place of God. This, after all, is the great point. It matters little how far away it is. God is there, and that is enough. And we may be sure that it is not so far away but that He can hear the humblest sigh of prayer or watch the gathering tears of penitence trembling on the sinner's cheek. And man, too, can look from earth to heaven. When God opens his eyes, and draws aside the veil, like Stephen, He can see right into it. "He being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Stephen found out the secret of the attractiveness of heaven. He saw Christ at the right hand of God. The King in his beauty was there, and that makes heaven heaven.

Some one being asked what he expected to do when he got to heaven, replied that he thought he would take one good look at Christ for about five hundred years, and then he might look round and see the apostles, and saints, and martyrs. And it seems to me that one glimpse of Him who loved us, and washed us in his blood, will repay us for all we can suffer here in this dark world.

A little child, whose mother was dying, was taken away to live with some friends because it was thought she did not understand what death is. All the while the child wanted to go home and see her mother. At last, when the funeral was over, and she was taken home, she ran all over the house, searching the sitting-room, the parlour, the library, and the bedrooms. She went from one end of the house to the other, and when she could not find her mother, she wished to be taken back to where they brought her from. Home had lost its attractions for the child when her

mother was not there. My friends, the great attraction in heaven will not be its pearly gates, its golden streets, nor its choir of angels, but it will be Christ. Heaven would be no heaven if Christ were not there. But we know that He is at the right hand of the Father, and those eyes shall gaze on Him by-and-by; and we shall be satisfied when we awake with his likeness.

But the company of heaven is more varied still—our friends are there. God the Father is there, Christ the Son is there, angels are there, and in Rev. vii. we read of "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues." We read of the redeemed who stand "before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." Yes, we have friends in heaven.

A bereaved father asked me the other day if I thought the little one he had lost had gone to be with Jesus. I could only tell him what David said when he lost his son, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." It is a very sweet thought to me, and it must be to you also who have lost little ones, that the King can take better care of them than we can. If we could look into the eternal city we should see the Shepherd leading them by the green pastures and the still waters. He will care for each little lost lamb Himself far better than its own fond mother; and is it not sweeter for them to be for ever with the Lord than down in this sad land of suffering and sin? Our friends are not lost, just gone before. They have had "the desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better," and He has gratified it. Although to live was to live for Christ, yet to be with Him, was, even with Paul, "far better."

But there is more in heaven still. Once the disciples had been out preaching and met with wonderful success. They had great power, had cast out devils, and worked many miracles. They came back greatly elated. Like workers in a great revival, they say to one another, "Is not this glorious?" But Christ says, "Do not rejoice at that. I will tell you what to rejoice about. In this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice that *your names are written in heaven.*" What a glorious thought is this! Our names are written in heaven. We may be sure of it. If the children of God are not to *know* that their names are

written in heaven how are they to rejoice? If there had been any *doubt* about it, how could the disciples have rejoiced when Christ told them to rejoice? It is our privilege, if we are Christians, not only to know it, to be quite sure of it, but to rejoice in it

The grand question of life is, *Is my name written in heaven?* Is my name in the Book of Life? Not, *Is it in the Church record?* That record may not be kept *in the same way* that the record in heaven is kept. And there may be names in the Church record which have never been written in heaven. But it is God's record we are talking about. God keeps a record, a book of the lost and a book of the saved, a book of the living and a book of the dead. Which book is your name in? Can you rejoice this moment that your name is written in the Book of Life? Weigh the question well. It is very important. For "Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire." "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth it, neither whatsoever worketh an abomination or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

Some friends, lately, in travelling, arrived at an English hotel, but found that it had been full for days. They were turning away to seek accommodation elsewhere, when a lady of the party bade the others adieu, and expressed her intention to remain. "How can that be," they asked, "when you hear the hotel is full?" "Oh," she replied, "I telegraphed on ahead a number of days ago, and my room has been secured." My friend, send on your name ahead, and the door of heaven can never be shut against you. Be sure it is a wise precaution. Then everything will be ready for you. And when the journey of life is over, you will mount up as with angel wings, and inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Many are spending their time and strength for a home down here, with its shallow luxuries and fleeting joys. But what will all the mansions of earth do for you, if you have secured no title to a mansion in the sky?

A soldier, wounded during our last war, lay dying in his cot. Suddenly the deathlike stillness of the room was broken by the cry, "Here! Here!" which burst from the lips of the dying man. Friends rushed to the spot and asked what he wanted. "Hark," he said, "they are calling the roll of heaven, and I am

answering to my name." In a few moments once more he whispered, "Here!" and passed into the presence of the King.

If we have made sure that our own names are written in heaven, the next most important thing is to be sure that our children's names are there. The promise is not unto you only but unto your children. Mother, is the name of that boy of yours written in the Lamb's Book of life? Is it not better that your children's names should be written there, than that you should secure for them great possessions on this dark earth? Oh, I pity the son who has never had an interest beyond the grave; but more the mother who has never told him of the rest that remaineth for the people of God. May God make fathers and mothers more faithful and true to their solemn charge, that their children may grow up to be a blessing to the world, and that they meet at last, an unbroken circle, in heaven!

Whenever I think about this subject, two fathers come before me. One lived on the Mississippi River. He was a man of great wealth. Yet he would have freely given it all could he have brought back his eldest boy from his early grave. One day that boy had been borne home unconscious. They did everything that man could do to restore him, but in vain. "He must die," said the doctor. "But, doctor," said the agonized father, "can you do nothing to bring him to consciousness, even for a moment?" "That may be," said the doctor; "but he can never live." Time passed, and after a terrible suspense the father's wish was gratified. "My son," he whispered, "the doctor tells me you are dying." 'Well," said the boy, "you never prayed for me, father; won't you pray for my lost soul now?" The father wept. It was true he had never prayed. He was a stranger to God. And in a little while that soul, unprayed for, passed into its dark eternity. Oh, father! if *your* boy was dying, and called on you to pray, could you lift your burdened heart to heaven? Have you learned this sweetest lesson of heaven or earth, to know and hold communion with your God? And before this evil world has marked your dearest treasures for its prey, have you learned to lead your little ones to a children's Christ?

What a contrast is the other father! He, too, had a lovely boy, and one day he came home to find him at the gates of death.

"A great change has come over our boy," said the weeping mother; "he has only been a little ill before, but it seems now as if he were dying fast." The father went into the room, and placed his hand on the forehead of the little boy. He could see the boy *was* dying. He could feel the cold damp of death. "My son, do you know you are dying?" "No; am I?" "Yes; you are dying." "And shall I die to-day?" "Yes, my boy, you cannot live till night." "Well, then, I shall be with Jesus to-night, won't I, father?" "Yes, my son, you will spend to-night with the Saviour." As he turned away, the little fellow saw the tears trickling over his father's cheeks. "Don't weep for me, father," he said; "when I get to heaven I will go right straight to Jesus, and tell Him that ever since I can remember you have tried to lead me to Him." God has given me one little boy, and if God should take him, I would rather have him carry such a testimony as that to my Master, than have all the wealth of the world rolled at his feet.

Mothers and fathers, the little ones may begin early; be in earnest with them now. You know not how soon you may be taken from them, or they may be taken from you. Therefore let this impression be made upon their minds that you care for their souls a million times more than for their worldly prospects. And if you yourself have never thought how little it would profit you to gain the whole world and lose your own soul, I beseech you not to let another sun go down before you are able to say that *your* name has been written in heaven.

HEAVEN.

Part II.

We have seen how God is in heaven, for it is his dwelling-place; how Christ is there, for He is at the right hand of the Father; how the redeemed saints are there; how our names are there; and now, if we are true Christians, we ought to have our *treasure* there. We are *commanded* to "Lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven." "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but *lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

If our treasure were in heaven we should not have to be urging men to live for heaven, or pleading with them to lift their hearts heavenward. Their hearts would be there already; "where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

It does not take long to find out where a man's treasure is, you have only to watch where his heart is. The man who makes politics his god, see how his face lights up the moment you talk about it! Here is a man whose heart is set upon business; put him in the way of making a few thousands even at the risk of losing a few more, and you have done him the greatest favour in the world. Here is another whose god is pleasure; his eye sparkles when you even mention it. One would think from such men that there is nothing worth living for but politics, and business, and pleasure. But talk to a child of God whose treasures are in heaven; the world scarce interests him. He will tell you how he has here no continuing city, how he is but a stranger and

a pilgrim, how heaven is his home. And as he talks of Christ, and the promises, and the hope beyond the grave, you see that he enjoys the heavenly calm which the world knows not of.

When I was on the Pacific Coast I spent my first Sunday in San Francisco. I went to the Sunday-school, but it was a very wet, stormy day, and so few teachers or scholars made their appearance, that the superintendent was in doubt whether he should not send them home again. However, as they had come through the rain, it was decided to go on with the lesson, and I was asked to undertake the task. The subject happened to be, "Our Treasures in Heaven." The blackboard was got ready, and being a poor writer myself, I handed the chalk to one of the teachers, and said to the children, "Now, I want you to tell me some earthly treasures; what do you suppose men think most of?" Some one cried, "Money." "Put that down," I said. "Anything else?" "Lands." "Put that down." Many strange things were said; one little boy said "Rum," and perhaps he was nearer the truth than any of them, for many a man will sell soul and body, and business and family, and home and everything else for drink; and when the catalogue was finished, I asked them next to give me a list of *heavenly* treasures. The first answer was "Jesus;" and as we went on from one to another, we found that the treasures of heaven were far more numerous and very much more precious than all the treasures which the earth could give. The young man who was writing down the answers was an unconverted teacher. As he scanned the lists and compared the earthly with the heavenly, he stood transfixed with shame. "What a fool have I been!" he says to himself; "I have come to this Pacific Coast, and spent my substance for such things of earth!" And there at that blackboard he vowed to God that for the rest of his life his heart should be set alone upon the things which are above.

Think with me for a moment what earthly treasures are. Suppose we set our hearts on money; misfortune darts across our path; there is the short-lived resistance, the brief struggle soon over, which the world knows so well, and we are beggars! Try reputation. In an evil moment we may lose the little we have ever gained; or those who have never had any of their own may steal ours away with the tongue of slander. If to our children we

are looking for our chiefest joys, alas for our hopes! for death may carry them away; or, worse than death, disgrace may count them with the living dead. Yes, and even grant us money, and our fill of it, or reputation, and the best the world has, or children, the loveliest and beloved of all;—is it not true that we have but provided for a few brief years, while the great eternity has been uncared for or forgotten?

"*Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth.*" It looks a little stern, perhaps, but it must be right. After all, all that a man is really worth is what he has got in heaven. We bring nothing into this world, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out. Therefore God says, *Lay not.* The Christian who does, suffers. There is no gain in it. It is done at a terrible expense, the heart's desire in exchange for the soul's leanness. Here are two ships coming up a river. The first, full sail, cuts bravely through the water; the second creeps along towed by another. She appears to be on the point of sinking, but still she floats. Why? Because she has a cargo of timber, and has become waterlogged. Lot was all right while he kept with his uncle Abraham, but when he left him, and got down into Sodom, he got a good deal of this world's goods, and grew waterlogged. So it is with many Christians. They have got waterlogged. They have got so much money that they cannot get into the harbour themselves, and they require others to help them in. The religious life gets sluggish. The spiritual pulse begins to beat slow. "Why is it?" they say, "that we do not have more spiritual power, and more joy in the Lord?" The secret is easily found out. People who ask these questions have got their treasure here.

When men go up in balloons they take with them bags of sand for ballast, and when they want to rise higher they throw out some of the sand. Now there are some Christians who, before they rise higher will have to throw out some ballast. It may be money, or any other worldly consideration, but if they wish to rise, they must get rid of it. If you have got overloaded, just throw out a little money, and you will mount up as on eagle's wings. Any minister will tell you what to do with it. I never saw any department of the Lord's work that did not want some money.

A friend of mine called on a wealthy Illinois farmer, to get him

interested in a soldiers' mission. He took him up on the cupola of his house, and said, "Look yonder, over that beautiful rolling prairie, that is all mine, as far as the eye can reach. He took him to another view, and pointing over the rich farms of the Mississippi Valley, showed him pasture land for thirty miles round, with large herds of cattle, and horses, and sheep feeding. "They are all mine," he said; "I have made it all myself." Then he pointed proudly towards the town, and showed him streets, and piles of buildings, and a great hall named after himself, and said once more, "They are all mine; I came here a poor man, but my own industry has done it all."

My friend said nothing; but when he had seen all, raising his finger, and pointing solemnly to the sky, "What," he said, "have you got up there?" The rich man's countenance fell. "Where?" he asked. "In heaven." "I have got nothing there." Alas! he had lived his threescore years and ten, and must soon enter eternity, yet he had no treasure there. "Is it not strange," said my friend, "a man of your judgment and forethought, making such a wreck of life, living for the moment, on borrowed time, to die a beggar, and enter eternity a pauper!" But a few months after that he died as he had lived, and his property went to others.

Oh! my friends, if there are any of you living for this world alone, remember that death will part you and your treasures for ever. Ask yourself, I beseech you, what provision you have made for the other life? Is it on that little boy that your heart is set, is he your god, the idol of your life? Or is it your money, or a name, or dress, or a position in society? Then are you disobeying the law of Him who will one day be your Judge. "*Lay not* up for yourselves treasures on earth.'

There is another thought I would like you to look at. Our *rest* is to be in heaven. In Heb. iv. 9, we read, "There remaineth therefore *a rest* to the people of God." That is another treasure we are to have in heaven. Let us not talk of rest down here, we have all eternity to rest in. What we want is to be faithful in the few months or years that we are here, and then we shall rest as eternal ages roll on. This is the place for *work*. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they do rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." Our works shall follow us.

We shall leave a record behind us, if we are only faithful, ere the night comes. We can set streams running here in this dark world that shall flow on after we have gone to heaven.

Twenty-five hundred years have passed since Daniel lived, but he lives to-day. His light shines out, how brightly, all over Christendom! We love to read his life. How it fires and cheer us as we read of him standing up for God in Babylon. His works do follow him.

A good many people have made a sad mistake. They think the church is a sort of resting-place. They unite with a church, and that is about the last we hear of them. They think that a good Christian has nothing more to do than get a good pew in a respectable place of worship, and all the work after that is to hear two sermons a week.

But, my friends, let us not think of rest and pleasure down here. We shall rest when Christ comes, but not until then. The time will come when the wicked shall cease from troubling, and the weary be at rest.

I heard of a Christian who did not succeed in his work so well as he used to, and he got *Home-sick* and wished himself dead. One night he dreamed that he had died, and was carried by the angels to the eternal city. As he went along the crystal pavement of heaven, he met a man he used to know, and they went walking down the golden streets together. All at once he noticed every one looking in the same direction, and saw One coming up who was fairer than the sons of men. It was his blessed Redeemer. As the chariot came opposite, He came forth, and beckoning the one friend, placed him in His own chariot-seat, but himself He led aside, and pointing over the battlements of heaven, "Look over yonder," He said, "what do you see?" "It seems as if I see the dark earth I have come from." "What else?" "I see men as if they were blindfolded, going over a terrible precipice into a bottomless pit." "Well," said He, "will you remain up here, and enjoy those mansions that I have prepared, or go back to yon dark earth, and warn these men, and tell them about Me and my kingdom, and the rest that remaineth for the people of God?" That man never wished himself dead again. He yearned to live as long as ever he could, to tell men of heaven and of Christ. And

that is what God wants us to do. We shall rest by-and-by; we shall have all eternity to rest in. But the Church is the place for work, and as soon as our work is done there will be the voice calling us, "Come up hither."

And then—for there is still something else in heaven—we shall get our *crown*. In second Timothy fourth and eight, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that day." There is a crown laid up for every one of His children. God has promised it. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." What did Paul run for? Salvation? Ten thousand times no; he got that at the cross. That was settled long ago. Paul ran for a *crown*. There will be a great many who will get into heaven, but they will have no crown—crownless Christians. I never touch that life of Paul, and I never hear his name mentioned, but it makes me feel ashamed of myself. If I may be allowed the expression, Satan got hold of his match when he got hold of Paul. He never got him off the right track. He kept his eye right on Christ, and now he wears his crown. Paul! what are you so ambitious for—to make a name? Why are you so desperately in earnest? "I am for my crown," says Paul. Do you hear what they say about you, "A mere babbler attempting to turn the world upside down?" They have made up their minds to kill you. The Jews say all manner of things against you. "I know it," says Paul, "but none of these things move me."

Take your stand by his side again. He has received thirty-nine stripes; four times has he been beaten, and now he is to be beaten again. "Now, if you get out of this difficulty, what will you do, Paul?" "Do," says Paul, "I do but one thing—press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling." What did he care for stripes? "You don't think," he says, "that these *light* afflictions are going to stop me?" Why, if we received one stripe on our backs, what a whining! I do not know how many volumes of books would be written about it. We would be called martyrs. Yet Paul calls them "these light afflictions."

Take your stand there again. This time they have stoned him. He is all bruised and bleeding. But the great warrior rises up and buckles on his armour again. What is he going to do? "You

have got out of this, Paul, what are you going to do next?" "Do!" he cries once more; "I do but *one* thing — press towards the mark for the prize. I do not want to lose my crown." Therefore he never turns to the right hand or to the left. He fixes his eye right on the crown. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown which cannot fade."

Look at him again. He goes to Macedonia, and the first thing he gets in Philippi is the jail. If that happened to any Christian in the nineteenth century what an outcry there would be! What lamentation there would be inside the prison! What scheming to get out, what claims for damages! But that is not the way this old warrior looks at it. "Silas!" he says at midnight; "it is time to have our evening worship." And there, in that prison cell, with bleeding backs and feet fast in the stocks, they sing their psalm of praise. It would be about the last place we should think of singing praises in, and if we did sing it would be some melancholy hymn! But not so Paul. "If God wants me to go to heaven by way of the Philippian prison," he says, "it is all the same to me; rejoice and be exceeding glad, Silas. I thank God that I am accounted worthy to suffer for Jesus' sake." And as they sang their praises to God, the other prisoners heard them; but, what was far more important, the Lord heard them, and the old prison shook, their chains fell off, and they were free men! Talk about Alexander the Great making the world tremble with his armies. Here is a little tent-maker who makes the world tremble without any army!

And then look at the end of his glorious life. He was in Rome and about to be executed. He takes up his pen and writes to Timothy, "The time of my departure is at hand, I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith." Thank God he kept the faith! He did not break away and teach false doctrine. He believed in the good old gospel that Christ died, and that men must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ if they would be saved. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown." I should like to have been in Rome when Paul was there, there was something there worth seeing then. I should like to have seen him walking down those streets. Rome never saw such a conqueror as that man. "Paul! you are going to execution; are you not sorry

you gave your life to the Lord Jesus? You have had to suffer so much, stoned, persecuted, beaten with many stripes, in many dangers in the wilderness, in perils by sea and land—are you not sorry? Would you give your life to Christ if you had it to live over again?" "Yes," he replies, "if I had ten thousand lives I would willingly give them all for His dear sake." He has nothing to regret, nothing to be sorry for. "Sorry!" he cries; "I thank God a thousand times a day that I ever gave myself to Him!"

Look at him as he marches along to execution like a conqueror. If you had taken your stand by his side you might have heard him whisper, "I shall be absent from the body and present with the Lord to-night." He has no worldly wealth to trouble him—perhaps a few tools that he used in tent-making—but in heaven he has treasures untold, and he makes ready to go for his crown. You can see a smile on his face as he lays his head on the guillotine, and his soul leaps into the chariot of fire that stands by its side. I can imagine them watching for him from the battlements of heaven, and there is a cry "Hallelujah!" as he sweeps away up to the throne. And I can hear the shout of the Master as he enters the pearly gates, "Well done, Paul; you have fought a good fight, you have kept the faith, you have finished the work that was given you to do; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!" And the Master rises and plants the crown upon his brow, but he takes it and casts it at the feet of his Lord.

Paul got his reward at last. Down here it was tribulation, but I have an idea that he thanks God more to-day for his afflictions than for his prosperity. John Bunyan thanked God more for Bedford Jail than for anything that ever happened to him. And Paul, in prison, takes out his pen and writes these epistles which have come down as a blessing through the ages. The streams of grace that Paul set running are running still. Eighteen hundred years have passed since He wrote these epistles to the churches, but their fruits are still going up from every clime and nation. And so if things go against us, let us thank God. Our reward is yonder. I do not believe a man will be much used of God until he is above the thought of receiving reward from men. "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for *great* is your reward *in heaven*." If

God calls it "great" it must be something worth having, therefore let us not spoil it by seeking the world's honours.

Not long ago there lived an old bed-ridden saint, and a Christian lady who visited her found her always very cheerful. This visitor had a lady friend of wealth who constantly looked on the dark side of things, and was always cast down although she was a professed Christian. She thought it would do this lady good to see the bed ridden saint, so she took her down to the house. She lived up in the garret, five stories up, and when they had got to the first story the lady drew up her dress and said, "How dark and filthy it is!" "It's better higher up," said her friend. They got to the next story, and it was no better; the lady complained again, but her friend replied, "It's better higher up." At the third floor it seemed still worse, and the lady kept complaining, but her friend kept saying, "It's better higher up." At last they got to the fifth story, and when they went into the sick-room, there was a nice carpet on the floor, there were flowering plants in the window, and little birds singing. And there they found this bed-ridden saint—one of those saints whom God is polishing for his own temple—just beaming with joy. The lady said to her "It must be very hard for you to lie here." She smiled, and said, "*It's better higher up.*" Yes! And if things go against us, my friends, let us remember that "it's better higher up."

I was going to New Orleans from Chicago a few years ago, and there were two ladies in the train with me. They got well acquainted with one another by the time they reached Cairo, where one lived, the other was going on to New Orleans. The one who had to get out at Cairo said to the other, "I wish you would stay here with me for a few days. I like your company so much." "I should like to stay," replied the other, "but my things are all packed up and have gone on before; I have no clothes but those I am wearing. They are *good enough to travel in*, but I would not like to be seen in company with them." Now that is the way with the Christian He is away from home here, his treasure has gone on before, and anything is *good enough to travel in.* If things don't go on smoothly down here we need not be too particular, they're *good enough to travel in.* If our treasures are in heaven our hearts will be there, and we shall be living as pilgrims and strangers on the earth.

One thought more. What occasions joy in heaven? If Queen Victoria should leave her throne to-day, what intense excitement there would be! Queen Victoria leaving the throne! It would stir the nations of the earth. The whole world would know about it. But I do not know that it would be noticed in heaven. But if there was one little boy down here converted to-day, it would be noticed in heaven. Jesus Christ said, "There is joy in heaven over *one* sinner that repenteth."

My little boy, don't you want to become a lamb, for the Shepherd to watch over and care for? My little girl, don't you want to become a daughter of heaven, a follower of Christ?

It may be that at this moment every battlement of heaven is alive with the redeemed. There is a sainted mother watching for her daughter. Daughter! can you not see her? She is beckoning you now to the better land. Have you no response to that long-hushed voice which has prayed for you so often? And for you, young man, are there no voices there which prayed for *you?* and are there none whom you promised once to meet again, if not on earth, in heaven? And which of you, fathers and mothers, but can hear in the angels' chorus the music of the little ones you loved, and who have winged their way to be in glory for ever with the Lord? Oh! shall we not all just turn our backs upon the world, and fall on our knees, and ask God for Christ's sake to write down *our* name in the Lamb's Book of Life, so that we and those we love may live for ever with the Lord!

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